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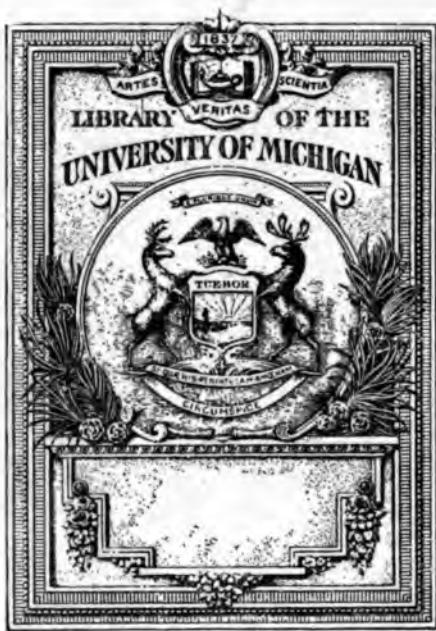
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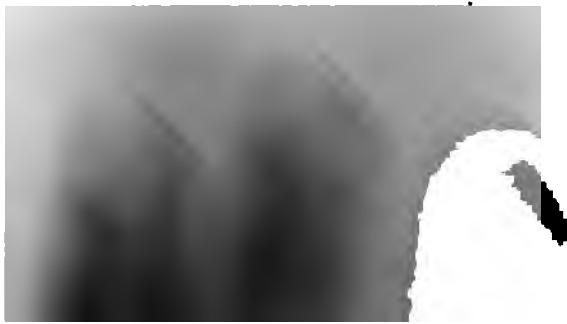
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A COURT IN EXILE
VOL. II

A COURT IN EXILE

CHARLES EDWARD STUART
AND THE ROMANCE OF
THE COUNTESS D'ALBANIE

BY

THE MARCHESA VITELLESCHI

(NÉE THE HON. AMY COCHRANE-BAILLIE)

WITH TWO PHOTOGRAVURE PLATES AND
TWENTY-FOUR FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

London : HUTCHINSON & CO.
Paternoster Row  1903



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A COURT IN EXILE

CHAPTER I

TROUBLES WITH THE COURT OF FRANCE

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THE safe arrival of Charles Edward in France was communicated to the Chevalier de St. Georges in Rome by Colonel Warren, who in a despatch hastened to congratulate His Majesty “on this happy event, and considered it the happiest day of his life to see the great hero so miraculously delivered from his enemys.”

This satisfactory news was further confirmed by Prince Henry, who wrote to his father from Clichy, October 17th, 1746, that he had had the happiness of seeing his “dearest brother,” whom he knew very well, even though he had grown “broader and fatter.” Charles at the first moment did not recognise the

young man who advanced to meet him, but Prince Henry told his father that as soon as Charles did so, no brother could be more loving and kind than he seemed disposed to be to him. He also informed the Chevalier that Colonel O'Brian was occupied in making arrangements for the reception of Prince Charles by the King, which was a matter that required delicate handling, though he himself could not understand why there should be any difficulty on that point.

These authentic accounts relating to the Prince's arrival in France gave intense relief to all those who frequented the Chevalier's house in Rome, for he had not only tormented himself at the scanty news that came to hand regarding his son, but he communicated his despondency to everyone around him. The anxiety he had felt at the commencement of the campaign increased in proportion as unpleasant rumours of the total defeat of the Highland army were spread abroad. This grave news was followed by terrible uncertainty as to what had befallen the Prince ; the various statements contradicted each other ; some said he was a prisoner or dead, and others, that he had been heard of in distant parts of Europe. But fortunately for all those who had had to endure the discomfort of the Chevalier's unstable moods during the past six months, he brightened considerably on receiving these dependable letters : his mind was at ease, and putting on one side all disappointment at the unsuccessful result of the expedition, he contented

himself with knowing that his “dearest Carluccio” was safe from his pursuers.

The Chevalier and Charles were both equally inclined to throw the chief blame of the failure of the expedition on the French Court ; they considered that Louis XV. had entirely misled Charles, who had counted on the King’s efficient aid, and by his failing to supply the necessary troops, the Prince’s calculations as to the strength of the army were completely in error.

Charles was burning with impatience to lay his position before Louis XV., and when, after some delay, Colonel O’Brian informed him that the King consented to receive him, provided it was an unofficial reception, in a kind of incognito, his indignation was greatly roused ; for he said that by the Treaty of Fontainebleau the King had agreed to recognise him as Prince Regent of Scotland.

Charles communicated these grievances to his father, but the Chevalier, while sympathising with him, thought it as well to act diplomatically with regard to the French Court, and tried to pacify Charles by pointing out to him that should the war between France and England be over before the Stuarts were restored, which was most probable, Louis XV. would find himself obliged to continue to acknowledge the Elector of Hanover as King of England ; and under these circumstances they could not expect to be accorded the privileges of Princes of England. This being the state of affairs, James observed, “It is wise

of him not to expose himself and us with a necessity of ceasing to treat us according to our birth, having once done it.”¹

This weak attempt at consolation on the part of his father did not go far towards allaying Charles’s feeling of irritation at being slighted by the Court of France : he therefore made up his mind that if Louis XV. would not agree to receive him as a Prince of England, he for his part intended to present himself at Court in the style he considered proper to his position. He started from the Château St. Antoine, which had been placed at his disposal by Louis XV., in such state as he could muster. In the first carriage with Kelly, the Prince’s private secretary, were seated Lord Ogilvy and also Lord Elcho, who, notwithstanding his repugnance to Charles, we still find in his suite. Charles was in the second carriage, dressed so as to attract all beholders. His coat was of rose-coloured velvet, embroidered with silver, the gold-brocaded waistcoat was trimmed with a spangled fringe ; the cockade in his hat and also his shoe-buckles were studded with diamonds, and on his breast shone the Orders of St. George and St. Andrew.

The Prince showed as great versatility in his costume as in his moods, and the rapid transformation from the tattered and torn wanderer with a long red beard, hiding in caves and huts, such as he has been depicted to us, only a few weeks previous to this exaggerated show and display, conveys the impression

¹ Stuart Papers, January 6th, 1747.

of a superficial nature : a failing that acquired greater prominence as Charles advanced in years. He was accompanied in his carriage by Lord Lewis Gordon and old Lochiel ; the third carriage conveyed four chamberlains ; while young Lochiel and other gentlemen followed on horseback.

Though there had been the differences we have mentioned between the King and Charles, the meeting was most cordial ; and Louis XV., after embracing him, congratulated Charles on having shown to the world that he united the qualities of a hero and a philosopher ; he also expressed the hope that he would one day receive the recompense of all his merits.

The King next conducted him to the Queen, who received him with great kindness and affection ; this was chiefly due to her friendship for the Prince's mother, whom she had known in her early youth. The Queen saw a great likeness between Clementina and her son, and from the moment she saw him she was attracted to Prince Charles. After this first audience she would often send for him and beg him to relate his adventures and dangers to herself and her ladies, who were all deeply interested in the Prince, and were frequently moved to tears at the descriptions he gave them of all he had suffered.

Charles had the further gratification of being complimented by the whole Court on his exploits, and on returning to the Castle after a banquet at Fontainebleau given in his honour, he could not fail to be

pleased that the general feeling was more in his favour than he had been led to expect.

Encouraged by this first interview with the King, Charles could not rest content till he had obtained his desire of laying his grievances on affairs in Scotland before Louis XV., and requested the honour of a private interview with His Majesty for that purpose. This request does not appear to have been answered satisfactorily, as Charles and his brother left the Château St. Antoine and took up their abode at Clichy, a pretty village on the Seine between St. Denis and Versailles.

The sympathy and attraction we have always noted in Charles's nature and person made itself felt as much in Paris as elsewhere. Even the populace were greatly interested in the hero from Scotland, and acclaimed him wherever he went. The first night he appeared at the opera and assisted at the performance, the whole audience rose to their feet and applauded him unanimously.

This flattery from the crowds was a great incentive to Charles's ambitious and restless nature, and no sooner had the first painful impressions of his defeat and hardships worn off than he again agitated the vexed question of a return to Scotland.

Strange to say, he had not profited by his former errors of judgment, and instead of consulting with the men of ability who had accompanied him to exile, he either acted on his own responsibility or made confidants of ill-advised companions.

Unpleasant reports had been circulated after the death of Sir Thomas Sheridan in Rome in December, 1746. Amongst other insinuations detrimental to his character, he was accused of having accepted pay from the English Government in order to neglect the Prince's education. The ignorance of Charles was certainly very noticeable, and his deficiency in grammar and orthography did little credit to his tutor ; even James, who when he gave him the appointment was convinced that Sheridan was worthy of the charge, had occasion some time before his death to doubt the trustworthiness of the man who was the Prince's constant adviser. These doubts were still further confirmed when the Chevalier found that Charles was lacking in duty to himself, and in affection towards his brother, and he wrote him a long letter of appeal, February 3rd, 1747, in which he said he must unburthen himself, and tell him how important it was that a firm union and strict confidence should exist between them. He reproached his son for making friends with those whose interest it was to alienate them, and showed his disapproval of Kelly, who had replaced Sheridan as confidant, and who does not appear to have been worthier of his trust than his former tutor ; and earnestly begged him to turn to those who had done all they possibly could for him.

James likewise disapproved of the Prince's conduct towards the French Court, by whom he had been offered a pension. He considered his refusal of this

offer a great mistake, and after a lengthy discourse on his displeasure at the line of conduct adopted by Charles, the Chevalier concluded by saying, “Enfin, my dear child, I must tell you very plainly, that if you don’t alter your ways, I see you lost in all respects. When you read this, consider that it comes from the most tender and loving of fathers, whose only temporal concern is yours and your brother’s welfare.”¹

The pension alluded to by James had been offered to Charles by Louis XV., who had finally granted him an audience to listen to his grievances. In the memorandum that he presented to the King, the Prince did not hide from him his opinion that the last expedition had been lost through the want of 3,000 more regular troops ; had he had them he would have been enabled to enter London. Owing to the want of provisions he was prevented from pursuing Hawley after the battle of Falkirk, and the lack of funds was disastrous to his encounter with the Duke of Cumberland, whom he met on most unequal terms because of the state of destitution of the army. After stating these personal views on the failure of the expedition, which vary considerably from Lord George Murray’s opinion on the subject, Charles next asked for 18,000 or 20,000 men whom he would employ for the mutual interest of France and himself.

With this demand it did not at all suit the King

¹ *History of the Highlands*, vol. iii. p. 370.

and his ministers to comply ; though with great generosity, the large sum of 62,000 livres was granted by the French Ministry for the relief of those adherents of Charles who had followed him to France, besides the pension for himself.

This offer of personal assistance he indignantly refused ; and getting more imperious as he saw the French Court was but little disposed to grant him the required troops, he wrote a letter to the King repeating in great measure all he had previously stated. He also announced his intention of retiring for the present to a place, where in his actual condition he would be less known than in Paris, in the hopes that His Majesty would think seriously of another expedition, on hearing which he would at once return to the French Court, should it be the King's pleasure.

The resolution of absence from Paris announced by Charles was highly gratifying to the King and his ministers, who not having the slightest intention of affording any assistance to the Prince, were becoming greatly annoyed at his insistence on the subject.

The only one of Charles's friends who objected to his decision to leave Paris was Lochiel, who feared that this step would give rise to the impression that the cause they all had at heart was abandoned for ever. Lochiel wrote a long letter to the Chevalier on the matter : he told James that though the misfortunes had been great, he considered that they were not irretrievable ; and forgetful of the misery and loss that had fallen on him in the last expedition, with

laudable self-sacrifice he said, “My ambition is to serve the crown, and serve my country, or perish with it.”¹

Charles remained obdurate, and announced that he meant to retire to Avignon, though his real destination was Spain, where he hoped he might obtain aid from the Spanish Court. This projected visit to Spain clashed with a previously concerted plan of James to send Prince Henry there : he had written to his youngest son to tell him he felt it was to the interests of their family, that while one son was in France the other should be in Spain, and he was so convinced of the advantages that would arise from his scheme that he was impatient to put it into execution.

Charles was by no means pleased at this project of the Chevalier, and it gave him an opportunity of showing his rapidly growing tendency to argue and disagree with his father.

He was further annoyed by hearing from the Chevalier that Lord George Murray, who was in Paris, wished to pay his respects to the Prince before he left. The Chevalier told Charles that Lord George only asked to be restored to his favour, and he begged him to observe that any unkind usage would be “unchristian, unprincely, and impolitick.” Charles left this letter from his father unanswered ; he pursued his intention of going to Spain and, before leaving Paris, he instructed his brother Henry to do all in his power to have Lord George arrested and put into prison.²

¹ Stuart Papers, January 16th, 1747.

² *History of the Highlands*, vol. iii. p. 375.

Nothing can excuse the unpardonable conduct of Charles towards his former General, who wandered aimlessly about Europe for some years, and died in Holland in 1760. There can be no question that he performed all his duties most conscientiously under the trying circumstances in which he was placed. He had put himself entirely at the Prince's disposal, and we have seen that his own concerns and comforts were quite a secondary consideration. He was often disturbed six or seven times a night to write despatches after a hard day's march ; every order, even those to officers on outposts, were written by his own hand ; he was scrupulously honest and, though a strict disciplinarian, he was loved by both officers and men, who recognised that he was a just man. He was deeply hurt at the ingratitude of Charles, and vindicated himself as to any blameworthiness regarding the disastrous result of the expedition in these words : “Upon the whole, I shall conclude with saying, if I did not all the good I would, I am sure I did all I could.”

The old Chevalier, who had looked forward to a reprieve from anxiety on Charles's safe return from so many perils, now found fresh sources of pre-occupation in the disquieting rumours of his son's conduct that constantly came to his ears.

As far back as 1742, James had noticed in Charles a tendency to overmuch wine-drinking, and had laid it to the account of his friends, who not only encouraged that vice, but influenced him against his

brother Henry. This tendency to drink became more pronounced in Scotland, when the hardships due to the cold and wet in the Highlands were an excuse for constant drams which, as we have noted, were repeated on every occasion ; and during his hiding in caves and huts a great deal of hard drinking took place. It is not to be wondered at if these reports, combined with the one that his son's views on religion were very lax, should distress his ascetic and bigoted father.

After a very brief stay at Avignon, Charles determined at all hazards to carry out his intention of going to Spain ; he therefore prevailed on his brother to write to the Chevalier, that he intended to give up the journey himself and left it to be undertaken by Charles, as this course of action would be of greater advantage to both. James, though fond of arguing, had no real authority over his sons, and agreed to Charles carrying out this wish, who was poorly compensated for his pains. The reception accorded him was very cold and formal ; even the Queen Dowager refused to see him, though he had written to "Madame ma Tante" that his chief reason for going to Spain was to pay his respects to her and the Royal Family. His Spanish relations, however, remained taciturn and indifferent to these efforts of Charles to ingratiate himself in their favour ; and finding all negotiations with Spain most unsatisfactory, he returned to Paris, when a correspondence between his father and himself on the subject of his marriage was kept up for a certain time.

Many names were brought forward as being suitable for the Prince's consideration. One of the French Princesses had been mentioned as the object of his sympathy even before he started for Scotland, and he constantly pledged a toast when far away in the wilds to "the Black Eyes, the second daughter of France." Patrick Grant, one of the Seven Men of Glenmorriston, relates in his narrative that in Glen-cannon upon Lammas Day, the Prince spoke much to the praise of one of the daughters of the King of France, and drank her health, and made all the company do so likewise. Patrick did not remember her name; but the Prince told them her hair was as black as a raven, that she was a mighty fine, agreeable lady, being sweet-natured and humble; that he (the Prince) could not fail to love her, as he was very sure she entertained a great regard for him. Upon this Macdonald said: "As that lady is so good-natured, agreeable, and humble, would to God we had her here, for we would take the best care of her in our power, and if possible be kinder to her than to your Royal Highness." This made them all laugh very heartily, and the Prince answered, "God forbid! For were she here and seized, to ransom her person would make peace over all Europe upon any terms the Elector of Hanover would propose." They spoke upon this lady about a whole hour without intermission.¹

We have every reason to believe that this was

¹ *The Lyon in Mourning*, vol. iii. p. 109.

Madame Adelaide, the King's second daughter ; but though she had occupied Charles's thoughts when he was alone and abandoned, she was eclipsed by a Princess of Modena, who again was discarded for a Princess of Spain, and a Princess of Sweden. Even the Czarina was discussed as an advantageous match ; but nothing came of all these contemplated matrimonial combinations, the thoughts of which were entirely obliterated by serious news from Italy, conveyed to Charles in a letter from James, June 13th, 1747, commencing in the following apologetic tone :—

“ I know not whether you will be surprised, my dearest Carluccio, when I tell you that your brother will be made a Cardinal the first days of next month. Naturally speaking, you should have been consulted about a resolution of that kind before it had been executed ; but as the Duke and I were unalterably determined on the matter, and that we foresaw you might probably not approve of it, we thought it would be showing you more regard, and that it would be even more agreeable to you, that the thing should be done before your answer could come here, and to have it in your power to say it was done without your knowledge or approbation.”

James then proceeds to enlarge on the reasons for this step decided on by Prince Henry. He states that he is fully convinced of the sincerity and solidity of his son's vocation, a vocation that he had long concealed from his father with the view of having it in his power to be of use to his brother in the late events. Things however had altered, remarks James, and he

being equally attached to both sons would feel he was resisting the will of God if he constrained him in such an important matter. James gets bolder as he enlarges on the subject, and forestalls the disapproval of Charles by telling him

“the resolution is taken and will be executed before your answer to this can come here. If you think proper to say you were ignorant of it, and do not approve it, I shall not take it amiss of you, but for God’s sake, let not a step, which, naturally speaking, should secure union and peace amongst us for the rest of our days, become a subject of scandal and éclat which would fall heavyer upon you than upon us in our present situation, and which a filial and brotherly conduct in you will easily prevent.”

James thought it a seasonable occasion to wind up a lengthy admonition always in the same strain, with a few words of reproof to Charles, and he also refers to his companions :—

“ You must be sensible that, on many occasions, I have had reason to complain of you, and that I have acted for this long while towards you more like a son than a father. But I can assure you, my dear child, nothing of all that sticks with me, and I forgive you the more sincerely and cordially all the trouble you have given me, that I am persuaded it was not your intention to fail towards me : all I request of you hereafter is your personal love and affection for me and your brother. Those who may have had their own views in endeavouring to remove us from your affairs have compassed their end. We are satisfyed and you remain master ; so that I see

no bone of contention remaining, nor any possible obstacle to a perfect peace and union amongst us for the future. God bless my dearest Carluccio, whom I tenderly embrace.

“I am all yours,

“JAMES R.”

This unexpected blow fell on Charles with all the greater force from having been accomplished in such absolute secrecy. It is surprising that at a time when James's movements and designs were jealously chronicled by foes and friends alike, he should have brought to a conclusion such an important event without any rumour of it getting known. It showed that he possessed greater dexterity and diplomacy than he had been generally credited with.

Even before Charles had time to grasp the full contents of the announcement he realised at the first glance that through his brother taking Orders any flickering hope of restoration to the throne was extinct, and a feeling of despair and sorrow fell on his heart ; this turned to indignation the more he considered the irreparable fact that had to be faced ; and it was in one of his uncontrollable fits of passion that he shut himself up for some hours in his room and angrily forbade his brother's name ever to be mentioned again in his presence.

Hitherto he had always drunk his father's and Prince Henry's health at dinner, but from that day his brother's name was omitted in the toast.

The moral effect of this news on Charles was most

demoralising : he no longer struggled to surmount the relentless decree of that fate which circumvented all his designs, and he abandoned himself still more to orgies and to the influence of Kelly, whose appointment as Secretary had been much commented on. He was spoken of as an "Irish Cordelier who passes for a notorious drunkard, and His Royal Highness's character in point of sobriety has been a little blemished on this friar's account."¹ And in a letter from Drummond of Bochaldy to Edgar, James's Secretary in Paris, he said he could only compare Kelly with the "infamous Secretary Murray, who was so loud and public a traitor that he was but a disgraceful instrument in the hands of Sir Thomas Sheridan, though Kelly was a monster of quite a different turn, combining trick, falsehood, deceit and imposition."

The pernicious counsels of this most undesirable companion alienated the Prince's best friends, who again represented to James how degrading to Charles's position were such associates ; but the Chevalier wisely refrained from further reproof, as since the day Prince Henry had entered the Church with his father's full consent Charles had completely ignored his father and had never written to him. In response to an appeal from Cardinal Riviera, who pointed out to him most forcibly his father's grief at his conduct, he conceded so far as to write occasional curt lines, but never unless he needed pecuniary assistance.

¹ *Pickle the Spy*, p. 28.

The signing of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in March, 1748, had an important bearing on the position of the Stuarts, and distracted their attention from these family quarrels. In this treaty France not only forgot the interest she had always volunteered to take in the exiled Prince, but also agreed to the stipulation insisted on by England, that neither "the Pretender nor any of his descendants should be allowed to reside within the territories belonging to any of the parties of the treaty."¹

As long as the war had lasted the French ministers had kept up an appearance of wishing to aid the Prince's return to Scotland in order to intimidate England, and it was even reported that the fears of another invasion delayed the embarkation of British troops for Flanders ; but there never had been any serious intention on the part of the French Government to compromise the position of France, and all parties being weary of a long war, the pacific overtures on the part of France were readily assented to under certain conditions.

Louis XV. had signified his approval of the raising of Prince Henry to the dignity of Cardinal, for it was a matter of total indifference to him, now that the war showed signs of drawing to a close, whether the probabilities of the restoration of the Stuarts were lessened or not by the Prince entering the Church ; and he certainly, in the face of the new aspect of affairs, would have preferred that Charles

¹ *History of the Highlands*, vol. iii. p. 388.

should quietly take his departure without any pressure on his part; but wishing to show him all the courtesy due to his rank, he offered him a residence at Fribourg and a handsome pension. Both these offers the Prince firmly declined, and said that if France chose to break her word with him that was not his affair, but nothing less than force would induce him to leave the country, to which he had been invited under the promise of active assistance.

Subsequent to an audience he had with the King, when Charles saw plainly he would not obtain any further concessions, he published a protest couched in indignant terms against the treatment he was receiving at the hands of France. After this he avoided all occasions of attending the Court; and whenever the conversation turned upon the late peace he either began to hum, or turned away without replying.

The French Court had appealed to the Chevalier to prevail on Charles to accept the position which was unavoidable in the actual state of public affairs in connection with other countries, but the feeble protestations of James were as futile as the persuasions urged by the various ministers who called in succession at the Château St. Antoine. A firm and decided refusal to depart was the invariable answer given to each by Charles; and in order to avoid the annoyance caused him by these repeated visits he left the château and established himself on the Quai des Théatins, where he was close to the theatres and the places of amusement

he loved to frequent. Here he gave supper-parties to the most elegant women in Paris. PrincessedeTalmond assumed the rôle of leading favourite. She was *née* Jablonowski, and a cousin of the Queen of France, while her husband was connected with the great house of La Trémouille. Though she was ten years older than Charles, her beauty, wit, and vivacity completely subjugated him for a time, and he enrolled himself as her *preux chevalier*. Another *habitué* of the gay house on the quai was the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, who disputed the Prince's favours with the Princess. She also was a brilliant talker, easy and affable ; her remarkable intellect was inherited by her son, who succeeded Choiseul as Minister to Louis XV. An anecdote is related of her in connection with a miniature of Prince Charles she always wore in a bracelet, on the reverse side of which was the head of our Lord. When asked for an explanation of the connection between the two, a witty friend of hers suggested : "The same words apply to both, 'My kingdom is not of this world.' "

Though these two ladies vied with each other in wishing to fascinate Charles, they did not share the same opinion as to what line of action he should pursue in his present dilemma. The Princess encouraged resistance ; whereas the Duchess being more of a courtier, urged him to accept the pension and to proceed to Fribourg ; and when she realised that matters were assuming a serious aspect between the King and the Prince, not wishing to damage her

position at Court, she ceased to frequent the Prince's house.

But eventually the Princesse de Talmond likewise adopted the Duchess's views, and saw it would be best for all parties that Charles should acquiesce in the King's demands, and she tried to influence him towards what she thought might be to his best advantage ; but when once he made up his mind on a matter, however detrimental it might be to his interests, a woman's affection was as powerless to move him as a man's more dispassionate advice : his misplaced vanity made him mistake obstinacy for firmness of character.

Louis XV. saw plainly that there was no reasoning with such a nature ; but all the same, he sent the Duc de Gesvres, the Governor of Paris, for the fourth time to the Prince, chiefly to enable himself to feel that he had acted with great deliberation and had shown all the forbearance in his power towards his royal guest. But the King's envoy no sooner commenced the well-known subject as to the advisability of Charles leaving France without delay, than he was cut short by the Prince, who before he had time to finish delivering the King's message, left the room, saying, "Excuse me, M. le Duc, I have business to attend to," much to the mortification of the Duke, who resented the insult to himself and the mission confided to him.

Strange to say, whilst Charles's popularity waned daily at Court, the interest of the public mounted in

his favour. Wherever he was recognised he was treated with the greatest respect and deference ; the admiring crowd were as much captivated by his affable, engaging demeanour as by the thrilling accounts of his adventures that had been freely circulated.

The differences between him and the King of France had become generally known ; and the rumour that Louis XV. had revoked his guarantee of support to the Prince only increased the feeling that he was being unjustly treated by the Sovereign of that country, whose want of consideration for the royal exile was criticised freely.

The sensational climax to this prolonged state of tension was brought about one evening at the opera.

The King was perfectly satisfied that he had done all that was possible to avoid an unpleasant crisis, but neither the patience that he had shown, nor the repeated letters from the Chevalier who expressed his surprise that his son should insist upon staying in a country where he was not wanted, had had the slightest effect. England had already commenced to remonstrate with France, and pointed out that she was violating one of the important conditions of the late treaty ; therefore, in the face of a probable renewal of hostilities should he fail in the stipulations agreed on, the King signed a warrant for the Prince's arrest.

On the morning of December 10th Charles was walking in the gardens of the Tuilleries, when he

was accosted by a stranger, who warned him that he would be arrested before the close of that day, unless he avoided it by departing immediately. It was not probable that Charles, who had braved the King and his ministers with cool indifference, should listen to a warning thrown to him by a stranger ; so without deigning to acknowledge by word or gesture that he had been addressed, he turned to one of his suite, and in an imperious tone ordered him to secure a box for the opera that night.

He left his house at five o'clock that evening for the theatre, and while driving at a foot's pace through the narrow Rue St. Honoré again a voice was heard begging him not to proceed ; but no counter-order was given to the coachman, and the carriage drew up at the entrance of the Opera House. The theatre was surrounded with troops : 1,200 guards were drawn up in the courtyard of the Palais Royal, sergeants and grenadiers lined every passage in the house, and the police stopped all the carriages which attempted to pass the streets leading to the theatre. The whole neighbourhood seemed prepared for an *émeute* instead of being under orders to arrest one unarmed man.

No sooner did Charles step from his carriage than six sergeants advanced, seized him, and carried him into the courtyard of the Palais Royal, where Major de Vandreuil of the Footguards came up, and said, "I arrest you in the name of the King, my master," to which the Prince replied, without a trace of emotion,

“The manner is a little too violent,” and said no more till, after being carried into a room, the Major produced thirty-six ells of black silk ribbon, and gave orders that he should be bound. At this stage of the proceedings the Prince remonstrated and offered his parole not to hurt either himself or any other person ; the Major did not vouchsafe a reply, but repeated the order. Charles was accordingly tied in five different places, his hands were fastened behind his back, and his legs were so tightly bound that he could not walk ; he had to be helped into a carriage that conveyed him to the Château de Vincennes, where he was thrust into a cell seven feet wide and eight feet long.

The whole affair would have been ludicrous, had it not been for a general feeling of resentment towards the King for his want of tact in making a public show of a man who, besides his position, had earned for himself a just appreciation for daring and courage ; and with regard to Charles there was equally a feeling of disappointment that he should have laid himself open to such ignominious treatment, and it was regretted that he should have sacrificed his dignity for the sake of bravado.

The exaggerated arrangements for the Prince’s arrest can only be accounted for from the fear that the populace might try to aid him to escape, or that through their sympathy for the Prince they might make a disturbance, which was always to be avoided if possible in an easily excited French mob.

But if this apprehension justified all the military

display, the public arrest drew, not only ridicule, but condemnation on the King and his ministers.

During the night pasquinades were posted up in different parts of the city, reflecting seriously on the conduct of the Government ; the press launched out in long paragraphs against the King, and without any veiling or disguise of meaning, suggested that instead of occupying himself with his mistresses, he would be better employed in attending to what concerned the honour of his country ; poets seized this opportunity, and verses of all kinds, some gross and vulgar, others ironical and severe, filled all the papers and pamphlets on the universal topic.

Not only had the King to listen to the disapprobation of the public, but at a levee the following day the Dauphin openly rebuked his father for tolerating ministers who betrayed the honour of his country, and he denounced the act that had just taken place as being an indelible shame to France. The King was somewhat disconcerted at the freedom of speech displayed by his son, and in the face of all these strong protestations he thought it advisable to release the Prince on the 15th of December. Having given his word that he would leave French territory, he was thereupon liberated, and in the uniform of an officer of the French Musketeers he started for Avignon, which, though in France, was in possession of the Pope and therefore was neutral ground.

CHAPTER II

STILL A WANDERER

The Prince sends for Clementina—She takes part in his reckless life—His incognito—His retreat in a convent—Excursion to London—His reported change of faith—Cameron's declaration—Glengarry the Spy—Cameron's execution—Charles visits London for the second time—Appears at a party—Birth of Clementina Walkinshaw's daughter by Charles—His party express dissatisfaction on his conduct—Mr. and Mrs. Thompson at Basle—Violent scene with Clementina—She retires to Meaux—Lord Elcho's indictment against Charles—He assists at George III.'s Coronation—Strange anecdote on that subject—Termination of eighteen years' incognito—Death of Pickle the Spy.

THE rough treatment to which Charles had been subjected by the Court of France, following so closely on his misfortunes in Scotland, greatly increased his feelings of animosity towards mankind in general, and soured a disposition already deteriorated by adversity and disappointment.

As soon as he arrived at Avignon he reminded Clementina Walkinshaw of her promise to follow him wherever he was led by destiny, and she hastened to his call. Unfortunately, instead of saving him from himself, she encouraged him in all his tendencies to vice, and drank as freely as he did.

An eye-witness relates a scene that took place between the Prince and her at a low restaurant in

Paris during one of his visits there incognito at a later date, when his prestige had so completely waned that no heed was paid to his frequent appearances on the boulevards. He was generally in some disguise or other ; but though his frightful dissipations had left deep traces on his face, and had nearly obliterated the nobility of mien which had been so noticeable through all his disguises in Scotland, there was still the indescribable air of race which was never entirely effaced, notwithstanding his debaucheries, and which led to his being repeatedly recognised.

On this particular occasion, both the Prince and Miss Walkinshaw were so much the worse for drink that they began quarrelling across the rough wooden table of the *cabaret*. Charles called her *une coquine*, and she answered back, "Your Royal Highness is unworthy to bear the name of a gentleman" ; they continued to taunt one another without cessation, and from words they finally came to blows.

The curious thing was that Charles seemed quite ignorant of the state of demoralisation into which he was fast drifting, and during this life of dissipation he turned restlessly from one Court to another in search of a bride. He still pursued the idea of a union with the Czarina, or with one of the Duke of Modena's daughters ; and failing them he hoped for an alliance with the Princess of Hesse-Darmstadt. He became so sanguine of the success of this last proposal, that he went so far as to request the King of Poland's permission to bring his wife into Polish territory ; but

this proposed marriage did not get beyond an interchange of preliminary transactions, and ended, as had all the other projected alliances, in an interchange of despatches.

The Chevalier, who had kept his own counsel for some time back, thought it his duty to step into the breach on the occasion of this matrimonial tendency displayed by Charles, and warned him in a letter December 30th, 1750, of the concern he felt relative to his son's present line of conduct, which made any thoughts of marriage impracticable; but as the necessity of securing the succession to their family was obvious, he appealed to the Prince's unselfishness and implored him not to consider himself only, but to modify his bad habits and settle down to a respectable life.

This request was not attended to, any more than previous letters of remonstrance from James had been, and it only confirmed Charles in his rule of acquainting his father as rarely as possible with his plans, so as to avoid his annoying reprimands.

He never wrote to him save when he found himself without any means, either for his own use or for the numerous Jacobites who pressed their claims on his notice; but in this matter James was not responsive, and repeatedly told Charles that he refused to occupy himself with his financial affairs, not being in a position to provide either for him or for all his friends.

The Prince was entirely without method in affairs



FROM A PORTRAIT OF CHARLES EDWARD BY LA TOUR.

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of money, and combined great generosity with despicable meanness. Whilst he was in Paris he recklessly threw away money on all sides, and never considered if his means permitted him all the luxuries he declared were essential to his position and comfort. He spent large sums on his portraits, and besides sitting to La Tour and Le Toque, the fashionable portraitists, he had various miniatures painted which he gave as souvenirs to his admirers.

Having fallen into this life of lavish expense and distractions characteristic of the most elegant capital in Europe, it was not likely that the minor resources of the Papal city of Avignon, or the discordant scenes with Miss Walkinshaw, would satisfy the love of movement and activity innate in Charles. He now entered upon a period of mystery, when with wonderful dexterity he carried out his intention of evading all authentic publicity regarding his doings, and offered the surprising spectacle of a prominent personage able to baffle all accurate knowledge as to his whereabouts for the long space of eighteen years.

No sooner was some clue obtained as to where he was last seen or heard of, than he would already be far away from the place named ; or, what was often the case, he would still be in the same town whilst substantiated reports declared he had left for another country. Paris, Dresden, St. Petersburg, London, and Stockholm were included in the list of the temporary haunts of this will-o'-the-wisp.

Secretary Edgar, who spoke of Charles as " the dear

wild man," and corresponded with him on the rare occasions that the Prince wrote to him, when the precautions as to secrecy were so rigorous that even at those times he could not be traced, said that he considered this incognito as one of the most extraordinary circumstances that had ever occurred.

Thoroughly embittered and desolate, when he thought of the dreary stretch of future lying before him, the endless eternity of which seemed unredeemed by any waters of comfort, Charles felt that to sink in the quagmire of despair is an easier solution than to struggle hopelessly against fate. He wrote to James, and also to Bulkley, under the name of "John Douglas," and said he must "skulk to the perfect dishonour and glory of his worthy relations until he found a reception fitting at home or abroad. He then added at the back of this letter, "What can a bird do that has not found a right nest? He must flit from bough to bough. *Ainsi use les Irondel.*"

According to Grimm, a favourite *pied à terre* of Charles from 1749 to 1752 was the Convent of St. Joseph, in the Rue Dominique. It was founded by Madame de Montespan, and here many fashionable ladies attached to the Court occupied rooms when they wished to enjoy a greater freedom than that obtainable in their own homes. Madame du Deffand resided in the convent at different times, and gave supper-parties to Montesquieu and other philosophers who played an important part in the salons of Paris.

At the time Charles found shelter in these cloisters, a romantic episode took place with the assistance of Madame de Vassé, who is mentioned in the Duc de Luyne's *Mémoires* as an attractive and handsome woman. She contrived, with the help of a friend, to hide the Prince during the day, and at night he stole unobserved to the apartments of Princesse de Talmond, who constantly inhabited the convent.

Owing to the Prince's incessant quarrels with the Princess, Madame de Vassé at last became so exasperated that she refused any longer to help him in his intrigues, or to put any of her rooms at his disposal.

Between his quarrels and reconciliations with Princesse de Talmond, Charles made an excursion to London in September, 1750, for five days, during which time he drank tea with Dr. King, a staunch Jacobite, at his house in Red Lion Square, and visited Lady Primrose, a powerful ally, who had offered a warm reception to Flora Macdonald after her liberation from prison. He also occupied himself with paving the way for a future rising, and, in order to keep his memory before the public, he distributed cheap trinkets amongst those jewellers who lived in hidden quarters of the town, and were in greater contact with the colony of Jacobites.

These tawdry trifles consisted principally of seals, rings, and watch-cases, on some of which were engraved a small likeness of the Prince; but as there were no initials or inscriptions the engravers

were able to assert that they were fancy heads. On some of the seals there was a motto, "Look, love, and follow," and these words could equally be declared void of double meaning save for those who were initiated in the intrigues which were still rife.

By far the most important event in connection with this short visit to London was that relating to the recantation of the Prince's faith. Concerning this matter there has been much dispute; but notwithstanding that Sir Horace Mann, in one of his letters to Walpole, said that though the report had been publicly talked of in Rome, the subject had finally been dropt, but not contradicted, all authentic papers tend to confirm the rumour.¹

It was far from being an unlikely occurrence. Charles fell far short of his father's and grandfather's steadfastness in the religion in which he had been brought up, though we have seen that even when a boy and under his father's roof, there was a great deal of dissension between his parents on the question of his faith. Lord Elcho mentions in his journal that the Prince's religion "was still to seek," and said he was very lax in the matter of observances which had been considered essential by the Chevalier. Charles had seen how fatal to the interests of the family had been the stringent bigotry of his ancestors, and he accordingly determined to adapt his religious beliefs to circumstances.

The most conclusive evidence on this interesting

¹ Horace Mann to Horace Walpole, vol. i. p. 338.

question is given us by Archibald Cameron, whose word was above suspicion, and who the night before his execution wrote on a slip of paper the following words : "I declare on the word of a dying man that the last time I had the honour to see his Royal Highness, Charles, Prince of Wales, he told me from his own mouth, and bid me assure his friends from him that he was a member of the Church of England."¹

Charles distinctly stated in a paper drawn up in his name that in 1750 he visited London, and whilst there abjured popery and joined the Church of England. This declaration is not in his own hand, but on another slip of paper we find the following words written by him : "My resons of declaring myself a Protestant at y^e age of 30^y my being at London y^e year 50^y, K. of P. uniform to go to Lⁿ."²

In a letter dated August 31st, 1752, from John Farquharson to Bishop Forbes, who had been imprisoned by the Government in 1745, and was now living at Leith, and to whom we are indebted for a valuable collection of narratives concerning Prince Charles, there occurs the following passage :—

"I am scribbling somthing to divert melancholie upon the sad news of the Young Pretender's appearing publickly to one of the Lutheran Churches every Sunday. No doubt you'll in your merry mood laugh at this pice of my news. But alas, Sir, so true it

¹ *Lyon in Mourning*, vol. iii. p. 135.

Stuart Papers, p. xviii. of the Preface to the first volume of the Calendar of Stuart MSS. belonging to the King.

is that the whole members of the Privie Counsell are summoned from their country houses to a generall counsell this night upon it. I wish I had him and his adherents at Tyburn. Then we should be quite of our fears which (I am afraid) we have more reason for now than in former times whilst that family's bigotry in a principall quite contrary to ours continued. But this young man has thrown that bigotry away, and is now at Berline publickly a protestant declared."¹

In the face of such strong evidence it is difficult to dispute a fact which it was to the interest of the English Government to conceal. It was constantly referred to, as we shall find in later years when Charles was in Italy, and it was only when his infirmities and want of aid led to his relinquishing all hope of returning to England that he again conformed to the observances of his religion of early days.

Having accomplished these various pieces of business in London and finding that nothing more could be done there for the present, Charles is next heard of back in Paris dressed as an abbé, and was recognised at one of the balls at the Opera.

The English Government signally failed in obtaining any definite news of his movements. Though Sir Horace Mann prided himself on his capabilities for unravelling all mysteries, he confesses himself to be quite at sea, and writes in 1749 :—

“ We are totally ignorant of the motions of the Pretender’s son. So many reports are spread, that

¹ *Lyon in Mourning*, p. 128.

one is totally at a loss what to believe. Most people agree that he has been privately to Paris to make a visit to the Princess de Talmond (?) a Poland (*sic*) and one of the Queen's ladies who took his part when he was arrested and sent to Vincennes. They say that she has treated a match for him in Poland where some suppose now he is gone; others say he is gone to Sweden; others to Berlin. Some believe that he will soon be again at Avignon, where his family equipages and even the table are kept, as if they expected him daily. Then they say he is come into Italy, to Bologna or Ferrara. He has obliged his father to send away O'Brien, because the son would have no confidence or communication with the father as long as that person was entrusted by him."

But if Charles was able up to 1752 to baffle all attempts of the most skilled diplomatists to follow his movements with any certainty, there was one person who, after this date, when it turned to his advantage, was able to contribute much useful information to the English Government as to the Prince's intentions and plans.

This traitor in the camp, we have every reason to believe, was Glengarry, one of Charles's Highland friends, and generally known as "Young Glengarry" till his father's death in 1754.¹ Mr. Andrew Lang, with great ingenuity, has identified the spy, who for a long time was shrouded in mystery, and has given us a most interesting work on the subject.

It is hard to believe that a descendant of the Lord

¹ *Pickle the Spy*, p. 146.

of the Isles, whose grandfather “mowed down two men with every stroke” at Killiecrankie, and routed the English troops at Shirramuir ; whose father, owing to letters in favour of the Prince being found on him, was imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle in 1746, should have turned renegade, but the explanation is not far to seek.

In January, 1748, this unworthy member of an honourable family, who called himself at different times Pickle, Roderick Random, A. Jeanson, according to circumstances, wrote to James to make a protestation of his loyalty. But this uncalled-for declaration was only an excuse to complain in the same letter that “he had not mett since his arrival in Paris with any suitable encouragement.” He applied at the same time for the colonelcy in the Scoto-Franco Regiment of Albany, which was vacant owing to the death of the “gentle Lochiel.”

The answer to this request was not at all what Glengarry expected. James replied that he was unable to give him the appointment of colonel, for it had been already promised to Archibald Cameron to hold for Lochiel’s son, a boy of sixteen. As regarded financial aid, the Chevalier had none to offer ; therefore the only thing he could send Glengarry was a duplicate of his grandfather’s warrant making him a peer.¹

This offer of a peerage in place of money of which he was in need, was not at all appreciated by Glen-

¹ *History of the Highlands*, vol. iv. p. 51.

garry, and it was from this time that suspicion traces his double dealings with both the English Government and the Stuarts.

In 1749 Pickle was in London, accompanied by the Rev. J. Leslie—not above suspicion himself—who related that he had pledged a gold repeater belonging to the beautiful Mrs. Murray, in order to relieve Glengarry, who, he said, was reduced to great straits.

This occurred in the month of July, yet in December of the same year Glengarry is spoken of as having “plenty of cash.” His unaccounted-for change of circumstances in so short a time—from penury to prosperity—points to the probability of negotiations with the Government during his stay in England.

Glengarry was eventually proved to have been as consummate a traitor as Murray of Broughton. He made constant excursions to Rome, and insinuated himself into James’s confidence, all of which confidences were communicated to the English Government as far back as the year 1749, who, if they were still in the dark as to the Prince’s mysterious movements, appreciated being kept informed of the Chevalier’s projects and opinions. The Duke of Cumberland doubtless referred to Pickle’s services when he wrote to the Duke of Bedford of “the goodness of the intelligence now given to the Government.”¹

At the time that Glengarry made overtures “of faithful and loyal services” to the Government

¹ *Pickle the Spy*, p. 160.

through Pelham, brother of the Duke of Newcastle, alleging that he saw "the folly of any further concern with the ungrateful family of Stuart," we find him the Prince's constant companion, chatting with him at the Bal Masqué in Paris, accepting from his hands a gold snuff-box, and during the Prince's short apparition from the realms of mystery, he tried to inveigle him to confide any details that might be profitable for his rôle of spy.

His darkest deed resulted in the execution of Archibald Cameron, the last victim brought to the scaffold for the Stuarts. The part Pickle took in this affair was brought to light by Cameron's widow, who denounced him to James; but sad to relate, even though her suspicions were roused, she could not avert the villainy of her husband's execution.

Dr. Cameron had returned to Scotland to obtain from Cluny Macpherson part of a large sum of money confided to his care by Charles when he left the country.

This money, comprising 40,000 louis d'ors, had been sent by France with some arms and ammunition as assistance to the Prince, but, owing to some delay, the frigates conveying it only arrived at Borrodaile after the battle of Culloden. No sooner was the Government informed of the fact, than Lord Howe was despatched to capture the French ships; but though they were much disabled and damaged by the English captain, they managed to make their escape after a fight of twelve hours, and the gold that

had been safely landed, and part of the arms, were conveyed to Lochaber.¹

Glengarry was accused of forging a letter from James in order to obtain part of this hoard, which was under Cluny's care till further required by Charles, and in order to screen himself, Glengarry mentioned that Cameron, Lochgarry, and others had also had a share of it.

Having acquainted the Government of Cameron's arrival in Scotland, he completed his evidence against his friend by stating that he had been mixed up in the Elibank plot, so called as it originated from A. Murray, brother of Lord Elibank, when a very crude plan was roughly worked out for placing the Prince on the throne. The whole scheme, such as it was, was made known to the Government through Pickle under the title of "Information," December, 1752.

Though the Government were totally unable, even with Pickle's infamous assistance, to make good their charge against Cameron, they were so provoked at the absence of tangible evidence of his guilt that, in order to exonerate themselves from this shameful condemnation, they had to go back to the old events of 1745, and even though it was proved that he had saved the lives of over 300 Scotchmen who were firmly attached to the Elector of Hanover, and in many instances he and the "gentle Lochiel" had given proofs of humanity and compassion to their

¹ *Lyon in Mourning*, Appendix, p. 383.

enemies, they remained unshaken in their determination to condemn him.

When his sentence of death was passed, he occupied his time of imprisonment in the Tower in writing his last words and wishes on different slips of paper which were left to the charge of his wife. She sent a copy to Bishop Forbes, and explained that the abrupt ending in the middle of many of the sentences was due to the denial of pen, ink, and paper, except in the presence of his keepers. This obliged him to seize the rare opportunities granted him of privacy to make these notes unobserved with a blunt pencil, for he was not even allowed the use of a knife, with which to sharpen it.

In one of these notes Cameron pronounced the highest encomium left us of Prince Charles, and the sincerity of his sentiments cannot be doubted :—

“ As soon as the royal youth had set up the King his father’s standard, I immediately, as in duty bound, repaired to it, and as I had the honour from that time to be almost constantly about his person till November, 1748, I became more and more captivated with his amiable and princely virtues, which are indeed in every instance so eminently great as I want words to describe. I can further affirm (and my present situation, and that of my dear Prince, too, can leave no room to suspect me of flattery) that as I have been his companion in the lowest degree of adversity that ever Prince was reduced to, so have I beheld him too, as it were, on the highest pinnacle of glory, amidst the continual applauses, and I had

almost said adorations, of the most brilliant Court in Europe ; yet he was always the same, ever affable and courteous, giving constant proofs of his great humanity and of his love for his friends and his country. What great good to these nations might not be expected from such a Prince, were he in possession of the throne of his ancestors ! And as to his courage ! None that have ever heard of his glorious attempt in 1745 can, I should think, call it in question.”¹

On the last of these slips of paper written by Cameron he noted the Prince’s change of religion. His execution is thus chronicled in the register of the Royal Chapel of the Savoy :—

“ 1753, June 9. Dr. Archibald Cameron drawn on a sledge from the Tower and executed at Tyburn for high treason on Thursday the 7th, and buried as above in the Chancel Vault. Yard and Fees I gave, vault fee not paid.—T. W.” (the sexton’s signature).

The words inscribed on the window in the Savoy Chapel put up to his memory, “a brave man, a Christian, and a gentleman,” appeal to us as a far more fitting tribute to a man whose simplicity and guilelessness were such prominent features, than would a lengthy panegyric. His death was considered a great blunder on the part of the Government, as “high and low, rich and poor, Whigs and Jacobites, were united in their wishes for his safety.”²

Charles had been in London a short time previous

¹ *Lyon in Mourning*, p. 135.

² *Ibid.*, p. 130.

to this tragedy ; for the unfortunate Elibank plot, which led to poor Cameron's arrest and execution, required that he should be in town to proclaim himself to the people at the right moment.

He first made known his arrival by attending a card-party given by Lady Primrose. The guests were all assembled and had gathered round the various card-tables prepared for their amusement, when the door was thrown open, and Mr. Brown was announced. Lady Primrose turned to see who was the unexpected guest, and a glance sufficed to convince her it was no other than the Prince ; for a moment she lost her presence of mind and nearly dropped her cards in her agitation, but she quickly recovered herself, and during the rest of the evening entered into general conversation with him, addressing him by his assumed name. It was not until after his departure that one of the guests remarked what a strong likeness Mr. Brown bore to a portrait of the Prince hanging over the mantelpiece in the drawing-room.

George II. was fully aware of the Prince's presence in London, and when asked by Lord Holderness, the Secretary of State, what steps he intended to take in the matter, the King answered, " My Lord, I shall just do nothing at all ; when he is tired of England he will go abroad again."¹

This reply, besides the unconcern shown by the Government at the bold way in which the Prince walked about the Mall and St. James's, was most

¹ *Life of Prince Charles Stuart*, vol. ii. p. 213.

convincing proof that they considered he had lost all touch with the public, and that his day for raising insurrections was past and gone ; this being the case, it is all the more surprising that they should so unnecessarily have interfered as to his choice of residence, nor can it be understood why they should have been so eager for information as to all that took place in the Chevalier's family.

This last conspiracy having so signally failed, the next news we have of the Prince was in Paris, when he was known to have walked about the streets in a disguise which, through its peculiarity, attracted the attention it was intended to avoid : his face was painted red and his eyebrows were dyed the deepest black ; and he held a handkerchief to his face as if to keep off the cold.

The testimony of Cameron's staunch friendship ought to have been all the more precious to Charles, as no doubt a general feeling of disappointment was spreading amongst his friends at his conduct and mode of living.

They were greatly preoccupied at his liaison with Miss Walkinshaw, by whom he had a daughter, born at Liège, October, 1753 ; for though, owing to the violent disputes that took place between them, they were only together at intermittent periods of time, still those who remained interested in Charles's affairs, considered her a dangerous person to be in his confidence. The chief source of danger arose through the appointment of her sister as housekeeper in the

household of the Dowager Princess of Wales, and it was naturally feared that the Government would utilise to its advantage the position held by the sisters in the opposing factions.

This consideration was brought to the notice of Charles by Goring, one of his equerries, who under the name of Stouf wrote to warn him that no honest man would mix himself up any longer in his affairs ; and likewise by an Irishman named Macnamara, who came over from England and remained in Paris nearly a week, for the sole purpose of trying to induce Charles to give up all further connection with Miss Walkinshaw.

But whilst the Prince admitted he had no particular sentiment for her, he remained unmoved in his determination not to discard her, merely, he said, to show that he did not permit even his best friends to interfere with his private life.

Shortly after this disagreeable episode, when Charles lost by his selfishness and disregard for others many of his friends, he went with Miss Walkinshaw and the child to Basle, where, under the names of Dr. and Mrs. Thompson, they remained some time. He represented himself to be an English doctor who had brought his wife and child to Switzerland for the benefit of their health. This seems to have been their home for some years, though Charles, under the name of Mr. Smith, made frequent journeys to Navarre and Liège, and generally passed the Carnival time in Paris. Dr. and Mrs. Thompson

are reported to have lived very comfortably at Basle, as persons of easy circumstances, but without show or display.

The discord between the Prince and Miss Walkinshaw increased daily ; it was impossible for them to be together without disputing. Finally, she did what Charles had refused to do, and after a more violent quarrel than usual whilst they were staying at Bouillon, she decided to abandon her cruel lover once and for all, and taking her child with her she fled for refuge to a convent at Meaux, July 22nd, 1760. Charles, who had been far too intoxicated to realise to what an extent he had ill-treated her in this terrific scene, was beyond himself with rage when he found that she had deliberately taken the matter into her own hands, and had severed all connection with him. He wrote at once to the King of France, and implored him to give orders that would necessitate his mistress to return to him ; but to this bold request of the abandoned knight, Louis XV. replied that "he could not force the inclination of anybody in that situation."¹

Lord Elcho went to visit the unfortunate lady in the Abbey, whither she had taken shelter, and she told him how utterly miserable she had been with the Prince, who often beat her with a stick, and was so unreasonably jealous of her that he surrounded their bed with chairs and tables, on which he placed little bells, so that if anyone approached during the night the bells would be set ringing.²

¹ *Life of Prince Charles*, vol. ii. p. 229. . ² Lord Elcho's Journal.

It is hard to believe that this statement is free from exaggeration and inaccuracy, as such conduct might be excusable in a madman, but could scarcely be admitted in a man, who, though often incapacitated through his vice for drinking, was yet capable at other times of acting as a normal human being.

Lord Elcho's dislike to Charles increased all the more that his debt was still unpaid; he could not conceal his annoyance at being kept waiting so many years for the payment of a sum he could ill afford to lose. He therefore never lost an opportunity of speaking against him.

When the Prince first arrived at Basle, Lord Elcho at once acquainted Lord Marischal, the Governor of Neuchâtel, of the mean contempt in which he held Charles. He told him that before he had known the Prince twenty-four hours he heartily repented of his folly in coming over to him, and asserted that all those who had ever been in his service cursed the hour they had entered it.¹

Such being Lord Elcho's feelings in regard of his Prince, he would have shown a greater superiority of character, and his name would have been held in higher respect, had he quitted Charles's service after the first twenty-four hours, when according to his own words he regretted having entered it; by so doing he would not have found himself compelled to spread petty libels against the man under whom he had agreed to serve.

¹ *Life of Prince Charles*, vol. ii. p. 225.

It was some years later that Lord Elcho made his last appeal for the 1,500 guineas in Rome at the time of the Chevalier's death. He went there ostensibly to offer his homage to Charles, who, through his father's death, became head of the family; but he did not lose sight of his ulterior motive, and on finding that Charles again postponed payment till he succeeded to the throne, he represented his grievances to the Cardinal of York, whose secretary, after a second letter from Lord Elcho on the subject, answered him very shortly that it was requested he should not trouble His Royal Highness on what was no concern of his. Lord Elcho was not more fortunate with a similar application that he made to the Pope, and the debt remained unpaid to his dying day.

After Miss Walkinshaw's departure Charles drank harder than ever; drink had by degrees become his only solace in misfortune. He had been chiefly exasperated by the loss of his little girl, whom he wished to have under his care. He was naturally very fond of children, and though often harsh and irritable with grown-up people, he was always gentle and sympathetic with children; but after the life of discord and violent scenes of recrimination passed by Miss Walkinshaw with the Prince, it was hardly to be wondered at that she should refuse to leave her child in his hands.

For a certain time his means were in a more satisfactory state through the arrival of Cluny with what remained of the treasure from Scotland; but at no

distant date from this he was seen selling his pistols to an armourer in Paris for what they could fetch ; and he was reduced to such a pass that he was obliged to eat his own words, and ignominiously begged Louis XV. to reconsider the question of the pension he had formerly refused with such scorn. It is not recorded whether that monarch was sufficiently generous to forget the past and came to the assistance of the poverty-stricken Prince.

There were rumours of the Prince being again in England in 1761, and what is still more surprising, that he actually assisted at the Coronation of George III. in Westminster Abbey, September 22nd of that year. A gentleman is reported to have recognised him during the ceremony and to have whispered in his ear, "Your Royal Highness is the last of all mortals whom I should expect to see here"; to which he replied, "It was curiosity that led me, but I assure you that the person who is the object of all this pomp and magnificence is the man I envy the least." It was not the first time that Charles had given proofs of audacity and daring when the freak was on him ; and it is not rare to come across those, who through perpetual misfortunes have been led to take a cynical view of life, and who find a morbid pleasure in placing themselves in situations that gratify their self-pity.

Though many writers have disputed the question, a curious article in the *Edinburgh Advertiser* of January 6th, 1764, would tend to confirm the report of the

Prince's presence in the Abbey. The article runs as follows :—

"A writer in the *Gazetteer* who signs 'Brutus' in a letter to the Duke of Devonshire says, 'Suppose, my Lord, it should have happened, that in the first year of the reign of George III., so much beloved by Tory converts, a parcel of lace from Flanders, with the picture of the young pretender set round with diamonds enclosed in it, was brought to a person of the first distinction through a mistake occasioned by a very near similarity of the title on the direction, and under the same mistake, it being candle-light, opened by him, but which was really directed to one of these new converts to loyalty, who has been rewarded by a place—I say—My Lord, if we should suppose such a thing to have happened, for I am far from saying that it has, what opinion can we entertain of those Whigs, who are servile enough to draw tamely under an administration that introduced such men into power, or continue them in it? It is now publickly said, that the young P——r himself came from Flanders to see the Coronation, that he was in Westminster Abbey during the Coronation, and in town two or three days before and after it, under the name of Mr. Brown, and being asked by a gentleman, who knew him abroad, how he durst venture hither, his answer was, that he was very safe.'"

The mystery in which Charles's movements had been enshrouded for so many years was from this date gradually lifted, as he himself used less precautions in concealing his nomadic mode of living : the excitement and novelty of being able to evade and

perplex those who were so eagerly trying to discover the legendary Prince had worn off, and the matter-of-fact platitudes of the daily struggle to exist had reasserted their exigencies.

Pickle, who had been of undoubted assistance to the English Government, lived to learn that the ministers did not surpass the Chevalier in generosity, and he accordingly wrote many letters of complaint to those who had employed his services urging that he was completely out of pocket, and that it would be necessary to send him "a bill payable at sight"; and again, in another letter, he begs respectfully to recall "Pickle" to the Duke of Newcastle, "who complains bitterly that he has been neglected and nothing done for him of what was promised him in the strongest terms."

Pickle died in December, 1761. Having ceased to be useful to the Government, he had been discarded by them long before his death; and had completely failed in obtaining the remuneration he considered due to such services as the betrayal of his Prince and his treachery towards Cameron, his comrade of the Highlands.

CHAPTER III

BACK AGAIN IN ROME

The Chevalier's failing health—His death, 1766—Imposing funeral—Charles hurries to Rome—His annoyance at not being accorded the privileges of reigning Sovereign—His renewed assurances regarding his change of religion—Interest on the subject amongst his followers—Clementina Walkinshaw signs a declaration to affirm no marriage had taken place—Claims a pension—Charles shows a disposition to avarice—His secluded life—The Cardinal prevails on him to request an audience of the Pope—Charles dismisses faithful attendants—A soirée at the Duchessa di Bracciano—The subject of his religious faith still under discussion—The summer at Pisa—The Grand Duke shows hostility to Charles—His sudden journey to Paris, 1771.

SERIOUS news from Rome regarding the Chevalier's health induced a complete change in Charles's life. He was at length to emerge from the haunts of mystery, during which time he had chiefly walked in the sordid paths of vice, and through impediments on every side to hinder any flight of ambition had fallen into a state of moral apathy. But now a chance was given him, and if he had profited by it there would still have been time to get back his former position.

Though his conduct had been most undutiful towards his father and had caused the Chevalier considerable worry and annoyance, on receiving the

unfavourable news from Italy concerning him, Charles thought, that instead of sulking in the Forest of Bouillon brooding over Miss Walkinshaw's desertion, or quarrelling with the old Princesse de Talmond, it would be advisable that he should be on the spot at the time of his father's death, which, judging from the report, could not be very distant.

Since the year 1760 the Chevalier had abandoned all political and household affairs : the Cardinal of York attended to the latter business, and Lord Alford undertook all his correspondence. The Chevalier was still occasionally seen out driving with his three carriages ; but for a long time previous to his death his altered, emaciated appearance struck all those who remembered the days when his dignified presence and keen attention to everything round him had been so noticeable. The break-up had been coming on gradually ; his nerves were shattered, he could no longer digest his food, and on account of his bad dyspepsia the Pope granted him a dispensation, which permitted him to take a cup of soup or chocolate instead of communicating fasting.¹ Constant attacks of fever reduced him to a shadow, and he finally took to bed, and only received such persons as were indispensable for his affairs.

Prince Charles also felt that it would be diplomatic to improve the terms between himself and his brother, from whom he had entirely estranged himself since he had entered the Church.

¹ *Life of Prince Charles Stuart*, vol. ii. p. 233.

Forgetful of all the injuries he had heaped on the Cardinal, and in order to pave the way to a reconciliation, he addressed a letter to him from Bouillon, 3rd October. In this he said that as his father was too ill to receive any letters, he begged his brother to be his intermediary with the Pope, and to convey to His Holiness that in the event of his father's death he hoped for the continuance of his protection, and begged his assurance that he would be recognised as befitting his rank.

This desire expressed by Charles was duly carried out by the Cardinal, who in a truly Christian spirit put on one side all the mortifications his brother had caused his father and himself, and was granted an interview by Clement XIII. at Castelgondolfo, 25th October, to whom he presented his brother's letter.

Personally the Pope was quite willing to agree to the Prince's wish, but as he realised that such a promise could not be given lightly, he replied that he must confer with Cardinal Albani on the question. The result of the conference was, that whilst they consented to receive Charles with the honours due to his rank as Prince of Wales, and permitted him the use of the pension that was assigned to the Cardinal, the title of King of England could not be granted him, as that had been the decision of all the other sovereigns. The Court of Rome had granted a pension of £1,200 a year to the Cardinal of York, but he generously handed it over to his brother and

also agreed to allow him another £1,800 out of his private income.

On receiving this answer Charles, without referring to this decision of the Papal Court, wrote another most affectionate letter to his brother expressing his great desire to see him again, and said that he was hurrying on his departure, and longed for the moment when they would meet.

He had already started on the journey, and was close to Italy, when the news reached him that the Chevalier had died during the evening of the new year, 1766. "The first of January (about a quarter after nine o'clock at night) put a period to all the troubles and disappointments of good old Mr. James Misfortunate."¹

On the 6th January the body was transported from the Church of the Santi Apostoli, where he had lain in state, to St. Peter's. During the three days he lay in state only the Italian nobility and British subjects were admitted into the church. The body had been attired in royal robes, a crown on his head, a sceptre in his hand, and upon his breast shone the arms of Great Britain in jewels and gold. A throne was suspended from the ceiling, on the top of which were the figures of four angels holding a crown and sceptre, and at each corner was the figure of Death.

When the body was removed to St. Peter's, the children of the charity schools led the procession ; they were followed by representatives of the principal

¹ *Lyon in Mourning*, vol. iii. p. 215.



THE CHEVALIER DE ST. GEORGES LYING IN STATE.

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churches, to the number of six hundred, and behind them came a thousand monks in their sombre garments carrying torches. The choristers of St. Peter's were dressed in purple silk, and fifty canons singing with the choir added to the effect of the boys' voices.

Round the canopy of state on which was carried the body were gathered the professors and students of the English College, and four cardinals on mules covered with purple velvet trappings formed an escort of respect for the deceased. The procession was closed by the Chevalier's household in twelve carriages lined with black velvet.¹

The Chevalier left his personal estate of about 40,000 crowns to Prince Charles, as well as a case of jewels belonging to the Crown of Poland should they not be redeemed; for it appears that they had been handed over to the Sobieski family in exchange for coin advanced by them to Poland, when the finances of the country were much encumbered. The jewels belonging to his own family the Chevalier desired should be divided between his two sons.

His death was greatly regretted in Rome, as though for the last years he had been unable to take an active part in the life of the town, he had identified himself formerly with the interests of the Papal Court and Roman society. He was most charitable, and as generous as was possible with his restricted means. He had inherited from his mother, Mary Beatrice, a kind and courteous disposition, and his

¹ *History of the Highlands*, vol. iii. p. 407.

death closed the most interesting chapters of the events connected with his family ; for Charles Edward, after his youth, was a sad representative of a name worthy to have been carried with greater dignity and pride.

No sooner had the Chevalier died than the Cardinal of York sent a messenger to Bologna requesting his brother not to hurry to Rome, but to remain a little while at Bologna, where the Marchese Angelelli had placed his palace at his disposal. The Cardinal wished to have more leisure to resume negotiations with the Pope on the subject of his brother's recognition as King of England ; but though his claim was proved by M. d'Aubeterre, the French Ambassador in Rome, out of personal regard for Prince Charles, the cardinals who met together to discuss the question violently opposed the request.

This decision was known in England with a certain amount of relief, as the English Government had not been entirely free from anxiety at the possible recognition of Charles as King of Great Britain by some of the European Powers, for such recognition might have led to renewed complications.

Sir Horace Mann, the English envoy at Florence, wrote to the Duke of Richmond—

“that the consultation whether it was expedient for the Pope to acknowledge the present Pretender under the title which his father usurped, was held the 13th, and the result was, that the Pope could not, *per ora*, grant what was demanded : this sentence has greatly displeased Cardinal Stuart and his friends.”¹

¹ State Papers, France, 24th January, 1766, No. 505.

Charles was far too impatient to assert his position to pay any heed to the Cardinal's request that he should remain at Bologna. Though the roads were in a very bad state, and though on the snow-clad Apennines his coach was overturned on the edge of a precipice, and he was only saved by a miracle, Charles still pressed forward into the less wintry valley leading to the city on the Arno. Here he was met by Lumisden, the late Chevalier's private secretary, who accompanied him the rest of the journey.

After leaving Florence the Prince halted at Montefiascone, the scene of his father's marriage with Clementina, who had thrust aside all difficulties to accomplish her wish of uniting herself to James Stuart. Both father and mother, after many years of disappointment and deceptions, had gone to their rest, and the son, the victim of fate, was equally pressing on and battling with the adverse destiny of their race.

On the evening of January the 23rd, 1766, Charles reached Rome greatly fatigued, and with his feet and legs much swollen by the long journey. His health was already undermined. This was due partly to the privations he had suffered in Scotland, but in greater measure to the abandoned life into which he had fallen.

On his arrival in Rome, he was greatly disappointed at the absence of any welcome to the place which he had always associated in his mind with the word home. Though nineteen years had passed since he

had left it, his impressions of boyhood and remembrance of the place as he had last pictured it were as vivid as if no intervening years had rolled on. Time however had not stood still, and in that lapse of years events had considerably altered the position held formerly by his parents in Rome.

His entry into the town was unnoticed ; no escort awaited him at Ponte Molle, no cardinals met him in smart coaches and gaily decked horses to form the cavalcade as a token of hospitality and friendship. He looked in vain to find some signs of his expected arrival, but one carriage only was waiting near the bridge, in which sat the Cardinal of York, who had come to meet the wanderer, and who drove with him through the narrow streets to the Palazzo Muti. Charles entered it with a chill at his heart, and sighed as he felt that it no longer represented the regal mansion of former days, but a gloomy, forbidding dwelling.

He was further deeply mortified at the ill-success of his brother's negotiations with the Pope, and he shut himself up, announcing that if his rights were withheld from him he preferred to be known as John Douglas.

All the same, the Cardinal always insisted on Charles being seated on his right hand when driving with him : a distinction no cardinal had a right to grant save to a crowned head.

When his arrival was known, *Te Deums* were sung in the English, Scotch, and Irish colleges, and prayers

offered up for the King Charles III. This step taken by the colleges seriously irritated the Pope, who sent to inform the nuncios that the Holy See did not recognise the claims of Charles ; and owing to the initiative taken by the rectors of the colleges many were sent away, and others had their pensions taken from them.

Whilst the Prince was absent for some days at Frascati, he found on his return, and greatly to his indignation, that the royal arms, which for the past years had been emblazoned over the entrance to the Palazzo Muti, had been removed.

The continued reports that from time to time were circulated as to Charles's change of religion could not fail to be detrimental to his position in the capital of the Pope's dominions. He was said to have arrived in Rome with "three Scots gentlemen, all of his own religion, that is, Protestants. He has often been heard to say it was the religion he would live and die in."¹

These reports chiefly emanated from Bishop Forbes, Bishop Gordon, a non-juring bishop in London, and Lady Gask, who with her kinsmen the Oliphants had spent two years at Charleville in 1761, not more than ten miles off from the Castle of Bouillon, where Charles was whiling away his time.

The two bishops and the Oliphants of Gask constituted the new elements of a conspiracy formed to restore the Prince; and they considered that the first

¹ *Lyon in Mourning*, vol. iii. p. 216.

essential step was, that Charles should openly declare himself a Protestant, and the next would be, to procure him a Protestant wife. This plot, though not easy of attainment, was carried on in all sincerity for nearly ten years. The first part of what was thought necessary in regard of the Prince's declaration of faith seems to have been accomplished without difficulty, as a paper in Gask's handwriting, dated 12th August, 1762, with the following message from the Prince, is still preserved by the descendants of the Olyphant family:—

“Assure my friends in Britain that I am in perfect good health; that I hope it will come like a thunder-bolt; and that I shall not neglect to recompense every worthy subject as soon as it shall be in my power. They may be assured I shall live and die in the religion of the Church of England, which I have embraced; and that no kind thing can be said but what I wish to all my dear friends, for whose good I wish more to be amongst them, than for any advantage it would be to myself, as I have no great ambition except for their welfare.”

Bishop Forbes copied this declaration into his book, and added:—

“N.B.—The above transcribed from a true copy, taken, upon honour, from the original holograph of that faithful friend,¹ who wrote every word of it at y^e desire, and from the mouth of C. P. R. When written, he desired the said friend to read it audibly to him, and then said, ‘it is very well.’ After which

¹ Olyphant.

he desired to have it in his own hands, in order to peruse it with his own eyes, and then he said, ‘it is perfectly right. Let it be sent as it is.’”¹

These words seem as conclusive as any evidence can be, and no doubt the Gasks being in constant intercourse with the Prince whilst he was at Bouillon, were eager to persuade him to assist their plan for his restoration by such means as they considered the most efficacious. Later on, the Oliphants and Bishop Gordon were in Rome on many occasions, and kept Bishop Forbes informed of the Prince’s concerns, generally speaking of him as “Cousin Peggy” or “the young lady.”

But though Charles, whilst under the influence of these friends, declared himself to be of the Protestant faith, they themselves were not entirely convinced of the sincerity of the conversion. This is shown by many letters from Rome referring to the subject. One to Bishop Gordon, 23rd February, 1767, says:—

“I long much, very much, to hear full accounts of my favourite lady, as there is one in Edina who was lately with her and her sister,² and who gives out that my favourite lady is for certain a papagee; that she goes frequently to Mass, and has two priests in her family. How much this galls me to the heart, and how manfully I contradict it, I leave you to guess.”³

A letter from Bishop Gordon, 31st March, 1767, is full of sympathy concerning the Prince’s disagree-

¹ *The Jacobite Lairds of Gask*, by K. Oliphant, published for the Grampian Club, 1870.

² The Cardinal of York. ³ *Lyon in Mourning*, vol. iii. p. 217.

able position in Rome, and warns Bishop Forbes not to pay attention to all the scandal and gossip relating to him :—

“ I would not by any means, dear Sir, have you disquieted by any clash from abroad or at home about your poor cousin Peggy, who, poor thing, is greatly to be pitied, having many things laid to her charge from which, on account of her unhappy and (as she says) unchosen situation, she has it not in her power to exculpate herself. Disagreeable things are put upon her continually, and bear them, alas ! she tells us, she must, for the present at any rate. Have compassion then on poor cousin Peggy, and believe not every report, tho' appearances, she confesses, may be sometimes against her, and these, magnified in every respect to her disadvantage.”¹

Lady Gask gives as her opinion that

“ the poor lady would be well out of that country that is so detestable to all that wish her well. Her situation is no doubt very hard, but for her business London is the properest place: but who can venture to advise it for a young woman like her ? Her own good sense, of which she has a great share, will make her see the place she is in is not at all proper for her. But by taking proper steps and bestirring herself a little, something that's good will cast up.”²

But whilst these true friends shut their eyes and their ears to scenes that they themselves witnessed, and refused to believe ill-natured gossip against the Prince, he certainly maintained a very foolish attitude of aggression towards the Pope, to whom he persist-

¹ *Lyon in Mourning*, p. 218.

² *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 219.

ently refused to pay his homage. He also avoided all the cardinals; his life therefore was very lonely; and the feeling of estrangement from all the functions and entertainments taking place in Rome, owing to the position he had taken up against the Pope, only plunged him deeper into the thraldom of drink.

The Cardinal was much distressed at the terrible situation, and in a letter he wrote to Scotland he said he was of opinion that his brother could not live if he continued in this way; and again later he said that, "were it not for that nasty bottle, which must certainly kill him at last, he was persuaded they would gain ground, but no living person can influence him."

In 1767 a report was circulated that Charles had been secretly married to Miss Walkinshaw.

Lumisden recognised that such a rumour would lead to the worst possible consequences, and having brought it to the notice of the Cardinal, he was desired by him to obtain a formal denial from the lady. After a certain amount of persuasion, she at last consented to write this important document, which meant to her the abnegation of any further claim on Charles. He, on his part, wishing to avoid any recurrence of annoyance on her account, begged Lumisden to tell her peremptorily, "His Royal Highness begs you will always remain in a monastery." The subject of a pension had still to be considered, but Charles decided that his income was far too limited to enable him to give up any part

of it, and left it to the Cardinal to offer her a very modest allowance.

Any claims on the Prince's purse were generally followed, on his part, by a rupture with the claimant.

Another of his former admirers and supporters is brought to our notice as having met with but scanty recognition for the help she had given many years back. This was the famous Jenny Cameron, who came to Rome to solicit the continuation of the pension he formerly made her; and if the lapse of years had left its traces on her face since the day when she headed her clan and rode into Charles's camp at Glen Finnan, she was still staunch to her Prince, and did not merit the rebuff that he gave her. Her hurried embarkation from Leghorn for England leads us to suppose that her interview with the Prince in Rome was most unsatisfactory.

These repeated traits of avarice on the part of Charles could not possibly be condoned. When his father died it was found that he was far better off than had been expected, though he also had suffered from the hallucination of poverty. He probably of set purpose exaggerated his bad circumstances to Charles, in order to avoid his constant appeals for assistance. Owing to the strict economy observed by the Chevalier during his latter years, a very large income had come to Charles; but even with this fortune at his disposal, there was nothing he disliked more than being told that those who had lost all for him had claims on his generosity.

A letter to Lord Shelburne from Rome in 1767, written by a lady who had been a friend of the Prince's family for many years, gives us a depressing tale of his daily life, and shows us how his appearance had altered since the days we pictured him as Bonnie Prince Charlie.

"I have at last seen —— in his own house ; as for his person it is rather handsome, his face ruddy and full of pimples. He looks good-natured, and was overjoyed to see me ; nothing could be more affectionately gracious. I cannot answer for his cleverness, for he appeared to be absorbed in melancholy thoughts, a good deal of distraction in his conversation, and frequent brown studies. I had time to examine him, for he kept me hours and hours. He has all the reason in the world to be melancholy, for there is not a soul goes near him, not knowing what to call him. He told me time lay heavy upon him. I said I supposed he read a good deal. He made no answer. He depends entirely for his subsistence upon his brother whom he never loved, much less now, he having brought him into the scrape."

As regards this latter reflection on the part of the lady, we are better informed, and know that she was entirely in error ; the Cardinal had not only proved himself generous towards his brother in financial affairs, but in endeavouring to assist him as much as lay in his power in all ways.

The solitude of the Prince's life, passed principally in drinking, distorted his views, and led to inaccuracies of statement. After a time the want of

variety and scope for interest in his daily routine became unbearable, and he began to regret the line he had adopted against the Pope, by which he had excluded himself from the whole of society. Though very much annoyed at having to relinquish his rôle of victim, which flattered his vanity, he saw that no concession was to be hoped for on the part of the Pope, unless he was the first to come forward to improve the strained relations. He therefore most unwillingly, and more as if it were a favour on his part, agreed that the Cardinal should request for him an audience of the Pontiff.

Through all the difficulties that had arisen between the Prince and the Papal Court, it had been most evident that the Vatican wished to conciliate the English Government by every possible means ; and now that the Prince had requested an audience of the Pope, the Papal Nuncio at Florence was told to acquaint Sir H. Mann with the fact, and to ask his approval of the Prince being received by the Pope, with the privilege of titles that had always been granted to the late Chevalier. To this request Sir Horace replied that any such recognition would be most offensive to his Court and His Majesty. Instead of resenting a decision so at variance with the personal wish of the Pope, the Nuncio thanked Sir Horace for having prevented a step being taken that might have given offence to the King.

In one of Sir Horace's letters to Walpole on the subject, he gives as his opinion that "the Papal

Court think it their interest to oblige England in return for the lenity with which the Catholics are treated in all the King's dominions. Besides that, they are tired of the Phantom, which is both troublesome and expensive, and they would be glad of an opportunity to get rid of it."¹

In consequence of this understanding between the Nuncio and the British envoy, the audience could not be otherwise than most mortifying to the head of a Royal House. Charles was requested to wait in an ante-room, whilst his brother, owing to his rank as Cardinal, was at once shown into the Pope's private room, and when, after waiting some time, he was ushered into the Pope's presence, he was announced as "the brother of the Cardinal of York," and had to stand all the time of the audience whilst his brother remained seated. Yet when once this step had been taken, galling as it was to a proud nature, the Prince found the advantage of having submitted to untoward circumstances; for from that day he was a frequent visitor at the Vatican, and was kindly received by Clement XIII., who, now that the disagreeable formalities were over, expressed his regret that political considerations alone prevented him giving the proofs he would wish of the great regard he had always felt for his family.² These spontaneous expressions of friendship for the Stuarts lead one to believe that the bitter feelings of

¹ Mann's Letters to H. Walpole, vol. ii. p. 139.

² *Life of Prince Charles Stuart*, vol. ii. p. 256.

H. Mann towards the exiles, exaggerated his views regarding the Pope's dissatisfaction that they should come to Rome for shelter, and lead us to doubt the sympathy for the English Court with which Sir Horace credited him. We have had reason to observe that the Pope personally would have acted as his predecessors towards the Stuart Princes, had he not been overruled by political influences.

As soon as it was known that Prince Charles was on friendly terms with the Pope, society, that had looked askance at him and had been uncertain as to the position they should adopt, and therefore had preferred to avoid asking the Prince to their entertainments, now stepped forward, and the nobility of Rome invited him cordially to their houses. Music was his favourite distraction, and he was still happier when he had a long day's shooting at Albano or Frascati, which reminded him of his boyhood.

It was all the more necessary for him to have a change from his sedentary and solitary habits, as he had a fatal facility for quarrelling with his truest friends. This was principally due to the dislike he had of anyone giving him advice counter to his own wishes.

After politely sending Jenny Cameron about her business, he broke with most of his suite one after the other, including Lumisden, who had been a faithful servant to his father. It was reported that Lumisden was given his dismissal owing to his refusal to accompany the Prince out one day when "his

condition demanded seclusion, for which, said Lumisden, the Duke of York thanked us for our behaviour in the strongest terms."¹ This circumstance was enlarged on by Bishop Gordon, who was then in Rome.

"John Hay, Andrew Lumisden, and Captain Urquhart were dismissest for a real act of disobedience. It was true indeed that the King had been in use for some time past to call frequently for t'other glass of wine at dinner and supper, not from any liking to liquor, but like one absent in mind, when he met with things that vex'd him, as too often was the case. That one day at dinner he had done so till he was somewhat intoxicated, and in that condition proposed going to an Oratorio in the afternoon, but they absolutely refused to attend him. Yea, he went into his coach, and they would by no means go into it, upon which he returned to his apartments, and dismiss'd them. In a day or two he sent for them to return to their duty, but they happening to consult with the Cardinal of York, he advised them absolutely not to return ; which counsel they took, and he put four Italians into their places as persons more fit for his purposes and designs ; the principal one of whom was very fit to be about a great personage, having been bred up at the Court of Modena. He now enjoys more ease and quiet than formerly, and has never been seen concerned in the least with liquor since that event, which has been happily attended with one good effect, to make him think very seriously upon what had happened ; and that no man could be of a more firm and determined resolution when once formed than he was known to

¹ *Pickle the Spy*, p. 320.

be. Too great freedoms had been used which were not easily to be put up with. Such were condescended when he was in Scotland. Not a blot, nor so much as a pimple was in his face, though maliciously given out by some as if it were all over blotted; but he is jolly and plump, tho' not to excess, being still agile and fit for undertaking toil. He said he was in a most miserable situation in respect of his religion, 'Being looked upon where I am,' said he, 'to be a firm Protestant, and at home in Britain, to be a rank Papist' and that his change of opinion was not of a late date. There were two grand points he always had in view, his R——on,¹ and an earnest desire to be married. He said that he had made his addresses to a Protestant princess,² and that this negotiation, upon the point of being concluded, was frustrated by the misconduct of those who had the management of it; but he went on to say, 'Should I match with a Popish princess, and be so happy as to have children, she should have nothing to do with their education. I would positively take that upon myself, and have them educated in my own principles.'³

From the above extract we are enabled to get an insight into the Prince's thoughts on his religion and marriage, both of which seemed to be occupying a greater share of his attention than was generally supposed. It is also interesting to read the varying accounts as to his appearance, which conveyed such contrasting impressions according to the interest and sympathy felt by the visitors for the Prince.

¹ "Religion" is here meant.

² Meaning the daughter of the Landgrave of Hesse Darmstadt.

³ *Lyon in Mourning*, p. 231.

A description of an evening party at the Duchessa di Bracciano in the winter 1770, by Lady Anne Miller, who herself assisted at it, gives us a graphic description of the position occupied by Charles in the salons of the Roman ladies and her own views of his appearance at that date.

"The Duchessa and I were seated on a sofa when one of the gentlemen-in-waiting entered and announced 'Il Re.' As there were many rooms to pass through before he could appear she hurriedly begged me on account to speak or take the least notice of him, as it was the Pope's desire that no stranger, particularly English, should hold conversation with him. I assured her that my principles were quite opposite to those of the Stuart family, but that I could not refrain as a gentlewoman from answering him if he spoke to me; it struck me as very ridiculous for me, a woman, not to reply if the Pretender spoke to me and would convey the appearance of my wishing to pass myself for being of political importance; in the meanwhile he entered, bowed politely to the company, advanced to the Duchessa, and seated himself on the sofa by me, having previously made me a bow which I returned with a low curtsey; he endeavoured to enter into conversation with me, and after addressing himself equally to the Duchessa, another lady, and myself, he at last addressed me in particular and asked me how many days since my arrival in Rome, how long I should stay in France. I was distressed as to how to style him: I thought 'Mon Prince' would not come well from me; Highness was equally improper, so I hit upon what I thought a middle course and called him *Mon Seigneur*. I wished to shorten the con-

versation, for all of a sudden he said, ‘ Speak English, Madam,’ but before I could reply the Duchessa di Monte Libretti came up and led me to a card table. On my departure the Chevalier, who was playing at the Duchessa di Bracciano’s table, rose up and wished me good night. He is naturally above the middle size, but stoops excessively; he appears bloated and red in the face, his countenance heavy and sleepy, which is attributed to his having given in to excess of drinking. His complexion is of the fair tint, his eyes blue, his hair light brown, and the contour of his face a long oval; he is by no means thin, has a noble presence, and a graceful manner; his dress was scarlet, laced with a broad gold lace, he wears the blue ribband outside his coat, from which depends a cameo as large as the palm of my hand, and wears the same garter and motto as those of the Order of St. George in England; upon the whole he has a melancholy, mortified appearance. Two gentlemen constantly attend him, they are of Irish extraction and Roman Catholics, you may be sure.”¹

Though there had been a great deal of talk, in Italy but little credence had been given to the Prince’s recantation of faith; and when Walpole informed H. Mann that there was no doubt on the subject, the latter replied that no one had any suspicion of it in Rome; his father, even had he been spoken to on the matter, was too incapable at that time of understanding or considering a subject that would have been most distressing to him, and if the Cardinal went as far as to admit even such a probability, would

¹ *Letters from Italy in the Years 1770 and 1771*, vol. ii. p. 194.
C. Dilly, 1776.

“damn him to all eternity.” Had he heard or believed such a rumour he certainly would not have entered into transactions with the Pope in his favour. Therefore, after weighing all sides of the question, we may come to the conclusion that, as often happens, the family are the last to know of many matters which gossips discuss ; and if we balance the probabilities on one side or the other, we may gather that the Prince adopted the view that most religions can be utilised for man’s good, without entering into theological discussions as to which form is right or wrong.

During the summer of 1770 the doctors urged the Prince to go through a course of baths at Pisa, the rendezvous of a great part of the fashionable Florentine society. He passed through Florence on his way to the watering-place ; and though his arrival was ignored by the Grand Duke of Tuscany, the Florentine aristocracy showed him every possible attention ; dinners and balls were given in his honour, and he found it difficult to tear himself away from the attractive ladies who tried to allure him to remain on.

On arriving at Pisa he could not escape from the espionage of Sir H. Mann, who was likewise doing the cure, and found a great deal to write to Walpole concerning the Prince, who, he said, had no determined title, but was known as Baron Douglas or Count Renfrew according to his fancy ; at the moment of writing he was Count d’Albanie. He further informed Walpole that the Prince frequented the casino and theatre, when he followed the Italian

custom of visiting the ladies in their boxes. He himself had refused to go to a conversazione at the house of the Lucchese envoy on hearing that Count d'Albanie would be at it.

The Prince returned to Florence after some weeks at Pisa to find that the Grand Duke had forbidden any hospitality being shown him. When the Grand Duke saw that the studied coldness and indifference of all those who had given such a warm reception previously was apparently not sufficient to induce the Prince to leave, he almost ordered him to quit the town.

This was quite enough to rouse the old spirit of obstinacy with which we are now familiar, and Charles was prepared to oppose the inimical attitude that the Grand Duke had adopted against him, and to stand to his guns as he had done in Paris ; but this time the Cardinal asserted his authority, and Charles, fearing to incur the displeasure of such a valuable ally, thought it best to resign himself to the Grand Duke's exaggerated interference, and returned to Pisa, where he commenced a second course of baths ; and, though Bishop Gordon had affirmed the contrary in one of his last letters, we fear that the report of his hard drinking was too true.

Late in the autumn of 1771, Sir H. Mann wrote home that the Prince had suddenly left Pisa, and travelling under the name of Smith, had proceeded to Bologna and Modena. It was generally believed that he was bound for Poland to see if that country

held out any prospect to him of a throne ; but, added Mann, “One cannot suppose that he himself at this time of life, and almost lethargic by time, would enter on so boisterous a scene as that of adjusting the crown of Poland ; the Poles could never make anything of such a log as this, though their minister at Rome sent an express to Warsaw to warn Stanislaus II. of his being gone thither.”¹ But both Mann and the minister were completely wrong in their conjectures, and instead of being in Poland, the Prince was in Paris negotiating a project far more feasible of attainment than any crown.

¹ Mann’s Letters, vol. ii. p. 226.

CHAPTER IV

MARRIAGE

Charles agrees to proposals for his marriage from France—Pension decided on—Betrothal to Princess Stolberg—Her infancy and youth—Worldly considerations of her mother—Marriage ceremony at Macerata—Letters from Scotland—Indignation of Austrian Court on the marriage—The bride and bridegroom arrive in Rome—Received as Prince and Princess of Wales—Preliminaries of expulsion of Jesuits under Clement XIV.—Description of Countess d'Albanie—Bonstetten's admiration for her—Their correspondence—Interesting Roman society—Revival of Jacobite hopes—Unsettled political affairs in England—Announcement regarding an expected heir—Strange story of Dr. Beaton—The Count and Countess settle in Florence—The Grand Duke of Tuscany—Charles relapses into bad habits—Scenes at the theatre—Contempt of Sir Horace Mann—Palazzo Guadagni—First meeting with Alfieri—His character—His sympathy for the Countess—Cavaliere servente—Symptoms of a rupture with Charles.

THOUGH the last parting between Louis XV. and Charles had put any friendly dispositions that might previously have existed between them to a somewhat severe test, all the same the French ministers had never lost sight of the possibility arising that the House of Stuart might still be of utility to France; an opportunity therefore presented itself when it was to the interest of Louis XV. to forget former disagreements with the Prince and endeavour to persuade him to do so likewise. This trait of generosity was all the more surprising on his part, as he had every

reason to bear in mind the scanty respect in which he had been held by France.

The ministers of the French monarch considered that an effort should be made to guard against the extinction of the House of Stuart ; it was too useful to French interests, and both the Chevalier and Charles Edward had rendered considerable service to France on various occasions at a comparatively small cost, and had been the means of diverting the attention of England from situations detrimental to the prosperity of their country.

Owing to Prince Henry having entered the Church, Charles was the only available tool for the intrigues of the Court of Versailles. It was well known that his health was in a precarious state, so what had to be done must not be delayed.

The French ministers had had many opportunities of observing that during the last twenty years he had lost all feeling of self-respect ; and that the fearless, courageous youth who had inspired so much admiration had deteriorated into a mean, vacillating egotist, whose former courage was replaced by obstinacy born of weakness. France therefore showed her contempt for the Prince, and boldly made him a proposal she would not have dared to lay before any other man, after having subjected him to treatment so totally devoid of all courtesy.

After some deliberation as to the most expedient way of opening the subject, the Duke of Fitzjames was commissioned to write to the Prince and make

him the offer of a pension of 40,000 crowns if he would agree to a marriage that France considered would be of great importance to him both politically and socially. A prompt acquiescence to enter into terms was received from the Prince, who hurried away from Pisa ; and at the time that Mann imagined him to be intriguing for the crown of Poland he was already in Paris eagerly agreeing to the suggestion made by the Court of Versailles.

The Princess, for whose hand overtures of marriage had been made, was Louise, the eldest daughter of Prince and Princess Gustavus Adolphus of Stolberg-Gedern. Her sister Caroline had a short time previously married the eldest son of the Duke of Fitzjames, which may have suggested to his mind negotiations in favour of his daughter-in-law's sister. Their father had been killed at the Battle of Leuthen in 1757, fighting for the House of Austria, when Frederick the Great gained a complete victory over Prince Charles of Lorraine and Field Marshal Daun. Both the Prince and his wife were of good birth, but small means. By his death she found herself left a widow at the early age of twenty-four, with four daughters totally unprovided for, the youngest of whom was but three months old.

The Empress Maria Theresa came to her aid, and after assigning a pension to the mother, took the children under her protection. To show further interest in this sad case, she sent the Chancellor of the State, Prince Kaunitz, to the widowed Princess

to ask which of her daughters she would wish to be named Canoness of one of the chapters that the Imperial Court possessed in the Austrian Netherlands. These well-endowed lay chapters at Mons, Nivelle, Andesmes, and Moustiers were in great request ; but so rigorous were the conditions of admittance that even aristocracy of high birth had been unable to gain an entrance.

On the future bride of Scotland—then only six years old—fell the Princess's choice to profit by the Empress's gracious proposal. She was the eldest of the four sisters, and was at once installed as Canoness of Ste. Wandru, in Mons, considered the first of the chapters, of which the Lady Abbess at that time was Princess Anne Charlotte of Lorraine, sister of the Emperor Francis I., and therefore sister-in-law to the Empress Maria Theresa. In 1769, so great had become the demand for the privilege of entering these chapters, that it was decreed they should be exclusively reserved in future for those who could show the requisite number of quarterings. Owing to these stringent rules, the chapters were soon composed entirely of the most distinguished aristocracy of Belgium and of the hereditary states belonging to the House of Hapsburg.

No objections could be raised to the baby Canoness on the score of birth. Her mother, Princess Stolberg, who was a De Horn, could claim alliance with the Bruce in Scotland, the Montmorency and Crequi in France, the De Croy and De Ligne in the Low

Countries, the Colonna, Gonzaga, and Orsini in Italy, and the Medina in Spain.¹

Besides her extended connection with the leading families of Europe, Charles, the elder brother of Prince Gustavus Adolphus, had like him followed in his father's footsteps—old Prince Frederick Charles—and both brothers made for themselves renowned military careers. Charles fought in the Seven Years' War under the Austrian flag, and was constantly mentioned for his valour ; and Gustavus Adolphus distinguished himself equally in the Austrian Netherlands, where he was serving at the time of the birth of his daughter, the little Princess, whose interesting life we propose to follow. She was baptised at Mons, in Hainault, under the names of Louise Maximiliana Caroline Emmanuel, on the very day of her birth, 20th September, 1752. Her two grandfathers assumed the responsibilities of godparents—Maximilian Emanuel Count Horn, Knight of the Golden Fleece, and Frederick Charles of Stolberg. Her godmothers were her grandmother, Louise, Princess of Stolberg, and Albertina *née* Princesse de Gavre, third wife of her grandfather Maximilian.

Though she lost her father at such an early age, the opening years of Louise Stolberg's life promised fair. After the first period of education and study was over, on reaching the age of sixteen, she was allowed to alternate her life in the convent with that of society. The rules of the cloister did not demand

¹ *Life of Prince Charles Stuart*, vol. ii. p. 264.



Print Room, British Museum.

PRINCESS LOUISE STOLBERG AT THE TIME OF HER MARRIAGE.

p. 384, Vol. II.



a permanent residence in the convent, and wherever she was presented by her mother she attracted general attention, as much for her charming nature as for her good looks. She united great intelligence and wit with gentle, soft manners ; and her talents, carefully cultivated in the convent, were by no means superficial. She was an interested reader of serious literature and a proficient in music and drawing.

In these pleasant surroundings, under the superintendence and interest of the Empress, Louise was entering on a life of happy prospects. She possessed the rare combination of a vivacious nature, keenly alive to all the enjoyments of a worldly life, and the faculty of being equally happy and contented in her sedentary occupations, in which she became engrossed. Out of this existence, where she had known only the brightness and none of the clouds of life, she was cruelly to be snatched for the selfish exigencies of politics, and was destined to be another victim who would bitterly lament the day when she was allied to a member of the House of Stuart.

Louise was twenty and Charles Edward fifty-two when the ill-advised marriage transaction was proposed for her acceptance, after the Duke of Fitzjames had obtained the acquiescence of Charles to a project which, while it was of benefit to the negotiators of the affair, was a deliberate sacrifice of the future of the young Princess.

On the part of her mother the predominant thought was, that she could dispose of another of her daugh-

ters ; and with the usual feminine ambition, this prospect of marriage appeared to her inexperienced judgment a far greater piece of fortune than was the case.

In the latest edition of Countess d'Albanie's correspondence we find a letter written to her in 1823 from her sister, Princess Gustave Stolberg, which in a few words reveals the shallow nature of their mother.

" My mother is well. She is much occupied in choosing her winter gowns. She has bought a white dress, which she showed me with great delight. I could not help thinking that if she is capable of being so preoccupied with such trifles, what a pity it is she never attached herself with the same tenacity to what is highest and best in life, for in that case she might have employed her ninety years to greater advantage."¹

If at the age of ninety Louise Stolberg's mother was thus occupied with her toilettes, it is not probable that when she was still, comparatively, a young widow, she would take long to consider what would be most advisable for her daughter's welfare ; nor was it to be expected that objections would arise on the part of the young Canoness, who indeed had very little to say in the matter.

The possibilities of a throne very naturally encouraged her acceptance of a man who was absolutely unknown to her, and of whose actual demoralised life

¹ *Le portefeuille de la Comtesse d'Albanie*, p. 626. L. G. Péllisier. Paris, 1902.



By permission of Count Marefoschi.

THE CHAPEL IN THE MAREFOSCHI PALACE.

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she knew nothing ; whereas his former intrepid feats were greatly enlarged on, and invested him with a romance that could not fail to be attractive to a girl who had had no experience of the world.

France urged that no time should be lost, for she did not intend that this manœuvre on her part, which might prove most advantageous to her policy, should fail owing to leisure being given to the bride-elect and her mother to find flaws in the matrimonial combination. With the greatest secrecy, for fear of opposition from Austria, the Princess of Stolberg and her daughter left Brussels and went to Paris, where the marriage took place by proxy, 28th March, 1772, under the instructions of the Duke of Fitzjames.

No delay was allowed to elapse between the marriage by proxy and the young Countess's departure for Ancona, and as soon as Charles Edward knew that she had started, he set out to meet her at Macerata, one of the principal towns of the "Marche," near Ancona.¹

The nuptials were celebrated in the private chapel of the Marefoschi Palace, which had been placed at the disposal of the Prince by the Bishop of Macerata. An inscription was put up to recall the event, and Charles ordered a medal to be coined, on one side of

¹ The name "Marche" dates from the Middle Ages, and ever since Charlemagne's reign it served to designate the boundaries or "Marche" of the different provinces of an empire. The "Marche" were governed by a military commander, or "Marchio," from which the title of Marquis is derived. The only "Marche" still known as such, in Italy, are those of Ancona.

which are the portraits of himself and his bride, and on the reverse the following words : "CAROLUS III.
NAT. MDCCXX. MAGN. BRIC. FRANC. ET HIBERN. REX.
MDCCCLXVI. E LUDOVICA MAGN. BRIT. FRANC. ET HIBERN.
REGINA. MDCCCLXXII."

Through the courtesy of Count Prospero Marefoschi, the present owner of the Palace, the writer of this work is enabled to give the following authentic account of the marriage as chronicled in the Archives of the Compagnoni-Marefoschi family in Potenza Picena.

"Report on the residence of H.M. the King of England in Count Camillo Compagnoni-Marefoschi's house, and his marriage with Princess Stolberg.

"Towards the hour of sunset, April 14th, 1772, a courier, sent by H.R.H. Prince Charles Edward Stuart, son of the late James III., King of England, arrived unexpectedly with a letter from His Eminence Cardinal Marefoschi to his brother Count Camillo. In this letter the Cardinal announced that H.R.H. was starting for Macerata in order to be united in matrimony with the Princess Louisa, Maximilian, Caroline, Emanuel, of Stolberg-Gedern, in the private chapel of the Marefoschi Palace, where H.R.H. would lodge.

"A few hours later H.R.H. arrived with Milord Karil, and on the Friday following he was joined by the Princess. She arrived at midday, and was received by the aforenamed Count Camillo and the Countess Margherita, his mother. The Princess was at once conducted to the apartment prepared for her, and afterwards to the chapel.

"Edmund Rian, Colonel of Infantry, in the service of the King of France, had been entrusted with the official mandate from Her Highness Elizabeth Philipina Claudia, *née* Princess Horn, the widow of Stolberg-Gedern, authorising the celebration of the nuptials of her daughter by Monsignor Peruzzini, our Bishop. The defunct father of the Princess was Gustavus Adolphus of Stolberg-Gedern, Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, Knight of the Palatine Order of St. Hubert, Count of Konigstein, Rochefort, Vernigerode, Hohenstein, etc.

"Under faculty given him by the priest of the parish of the SS. XII. Apostoli, our most worthy Bishop, Monsignor Peruzzini was robed in his pontifical vestments, and joined in matrimony the above-mentioned Prince and Princess. Besides their own friends who assisted at the ceremony, Monsignor Finocchietti, Governor-General of this province, the aforementioned Count Camillo Marefoschi, and Signor de Pellicani, one of the gentry of the place, were also present.

"Many receptions were given during the days that T.R.H. remained in Casa Marefoschi. An academy of music by foreign artists was held both Saturday and Sunday evenings. The principal families of the town were present at both receptions, and were served with sumptuous and abundant refreshments. Not the nobility only, but persons of other rank participated in the public festivities.

"On Sunday, 19th, at five in the afternoon, the Royal pair, accompanied by their suite, left for Rome. Before starting, they were most generous in distributing large sums of money to the households of both Compagnoni-Marefoschi and that of Monsignor the Bishop."

Needless to say, the rumours of the Prince's projected marriage, which only spread after the ceremony by proxy had taken place, and when he had already started to meet his bride, caused intense interest and excitement in England amongst his friends. Bishop Gordon and the Oliphants were burning with impatience to communicate this long-wished-for news to Bishop Forbes. As soon as Bishop Gordon was perfectly sure of the fact, he wrote a few lines to acquaint his friend in Edinburgh of what they had so urgently desired.

"London, April 28, 1772. Till Sunday last, and not before, had I absolute certainty of a late interesting event. God grant it may be followed by every happy and desirable consequence. It is certainly what one of the parties has been for some time very desirous of."¹

This gratifying announcement was replied to by Bishop Forbes, and he eagerly asked many questions about the bride, and wished to know her name.

But Bishop Gordon was unable to satisfy this laudable curiosity on the Bishop's part till June, and said that only within the last two hours he could inform his friends that the lady's name was Louisa, and a most amiable Princess by all accounts.²

The official report on the marriage as preserved in the Marefoschi Archives is completed by the following details, quaintly worded, in a letter from John

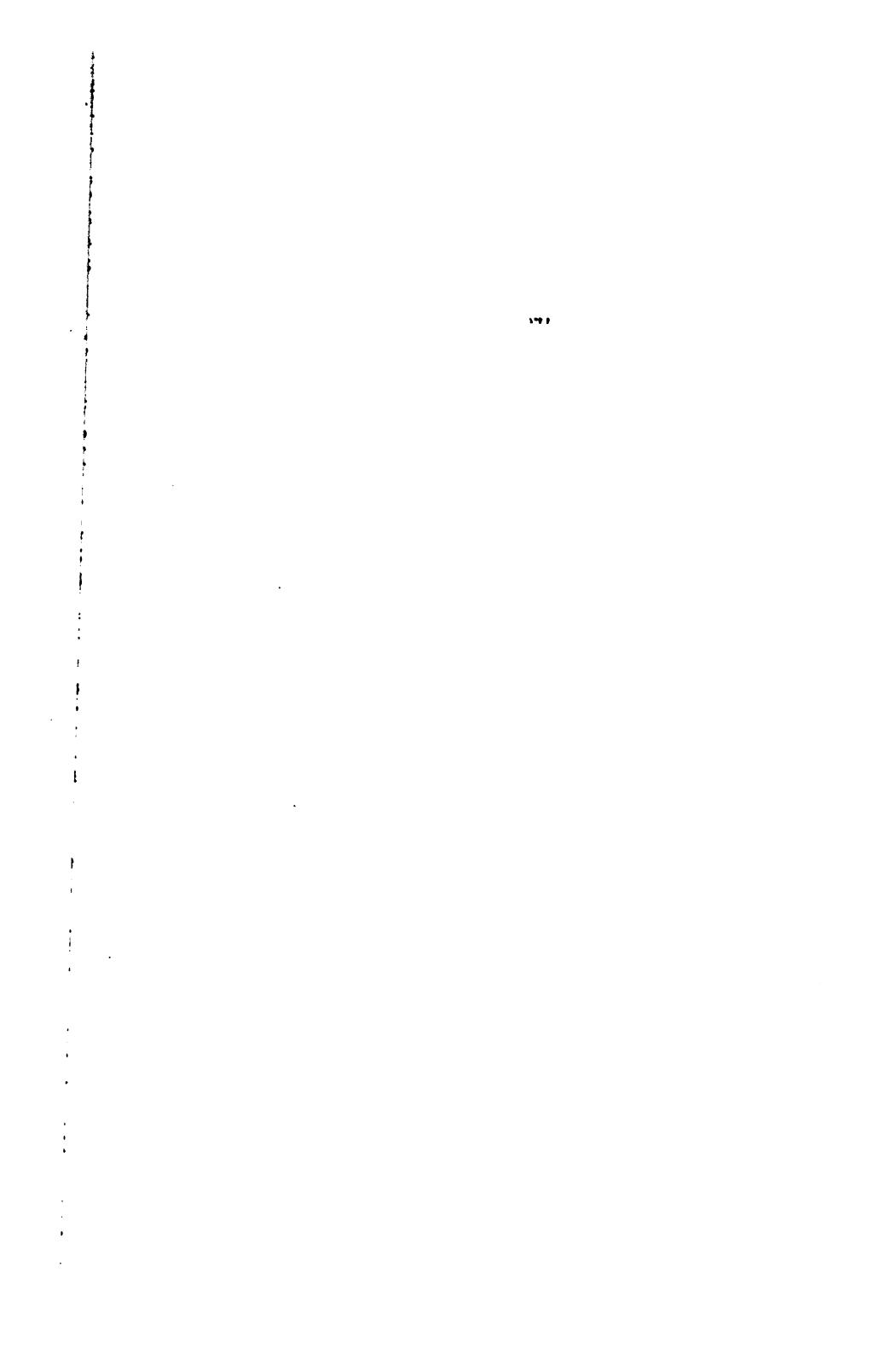
¹ *Lyon in Mourning*, vol. iii. p. 262.

² *Ibid.*, p. 263.

QVOD. HEIC. XV. KAL. MAIAS
AN. R. S. CICLOCCCLXKII
HOSPES. HOSPITI
CAROLVS. III. REX. M. BRITTANNIAE
FRANCIAE. ET. HIBERNIAE
PORREXERIT. DEXTERAM
LVDOVICAЕ. FIL. GVSTAVII
DE. STOLBERG. GVEDERN
PRINC. S. R. I. EQVT. ORD. PALATINI
COMIT. DE. ROCNEGTEIN. ROCCA FORT
VERNIGORODE. HOHENSTEIN. &c
EAMQVE. SERVATIS. S. R. E. RITIBVS
DVXERIT. IN. MATRIMONIVM
CAMILLVS. COMPAGNONTVS. MARFVSCHIVS
PRAESENS. PLAUDENS
FAVSTA. OMNIA. ADPRECANS
M.P.

By permission of Count Marefoschi.

THE INSCRIPTION IN THE CHAPEL RECORDING THE MARRIAGE.



Farquharson of Aldberg, who wrote from Dunkerque, 22nd May :—

"No doubt you have heard that the Chevalier de St. Georges, or as some of his followers here call him, King Charles the Third, has been married with a daughter of the Princess of Stolberg's. Now I design to make you laugh with the whole ceremony which was as great as that of a Prince indeed. The Chevalier with my Lord Carryll and five servants left Rome incog (*sic*) and came to Macerati, from whence my Lord Carryll set out for that holy place, Loretto, where he received the Princess, an amiable lady of twenty years of age, and brought her to Macerati where they were married by the Bishop thereof, April the 17th, on Good Friday, the better day the better deed. They stayed there till Easter Sunday at night when they set off, and next day came to the Palace of the Count de Spada, whose brother is in the Chevalier's service, where they stayed one day and arrived in Rome the next. Their entry into Rome was as follows, first four couriers, the Chevalier's post-chaise, then the Princess's coach-and-six, followed by two other post-chaises, the Chevalier and the Princess in their coach, followed by the coaches-and-six with his attendants. The confluence of the people was surprising at the cavalcade. The Cardinal of York paid a visit to the Princess the next morning, had a conference with her for an hour, and made her a present of a gold snuff-box set with diamonds of great value. But what shall I tell you? The outside, beautiful as it was, was nothing in comparison of the beauty within. Oh! my dear Lord! it contained an order upon his banker to pay her down 40,000 Roman

crowns, near equal to 10,000 p^{ds.} sterling with a settlement of 4,000 p^{ds.} sterling a year upon her. What think you of this affair? She is pretty and young, he strong and vigorous. They may produce a race of pretenders that never will finish, which the French will be always playing upon every quarrel. *Crescent laete.* May they increase fruitfully. *Honi soit qui mal y pense.*"¹

When the Empress Maria Theresa was informed that a marriage had actually been concluded between Charles Edward and Louise of Stolberg without her wishes having been consulted, or a word asked as to her consent, she was most indignant at such an omission on the part of the Princess. The Stolberg family were entirely supported by her, and the young Canoness had been especially under her protection and supervision.

Prince Kaunitz was charged to write a letter to Princess Stolberg expressive of the Empress's great displeasure and astonishment that she should so far have forgotten her position of dependence on the Court of Austria as to have entered into matrimonial arrangements of any description for her daughter without the sanction of the Empress; still more was her action condemned, as it concerned a marriage with such an unadvisable person as the Pretender.

The payment of Princess Stolberg's pension was suspended in consequence of her lack of regard towards her benefactress; she was also requested to refrain from attending Court.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 265.

It was due to Prince Charles of Lorraine, who governed Flanders, Brabant, Namur, and Hennegau in the name of the Empress, that the repentant Princess was finally restored to favour. He recalled to Maria Theresa's mind the fatal battle of Leuthen, when Gustavus Adolphus Stolberg fell mortally wounded fighting for her cause ; he reminded her of ties of olden days with the Stuarts, and brought to her memory the time when the Chevalier de St. Georges was never refused a home in Lorraine ; and finally through his powers of persuasion he calmed the angry indignation of the Empress, who revoked her stern decree and accepted the Princess's supplications for pardon.

As soon as Charles Edward and his wife arrived in Rome he returned to the old question of his recognition as Sovereign, and through Cardinal Pallavicini, the Secretary of State, he informed the Vatican of the arrival of the King and Queen of England.

The Prince bore in mind the late Pope's protestations of friendship towards him and his family, with which he had soothed the irritation felt by Charles at the conduct of the Vatican on the death of his father ; but Clement XIV. had no reason to revoke his predecessor's decision, and was far too astute and clear in his judgment to do anything that might provoke unpleasant situations. Therefore, as was to be expected, the Vatican remained obdurate, and while in the little Court of Palazzo Muti Charles and his

wife reigned as King and Queen, they were formally recognised as Prince and Princess of Wales.

Clement XIV. had more serious questions to occupy his thoughts than such an insignificant trifle as the recognition of an uncrowned king.

The question of the expulsion of the Jesuits was occupying the interest of the whole of Europe : it took place under Clement XIV., in July, 1773, and the Order was not restored till 1814, under the pontificate of Pius VIII.

This radical measure, passed by Pope Clement, led to a feeling that the Jesuits would find means to avenge themselves. Prophecies as to his death were circulated, and gained all the more credit as the Pope's health began visibly to decline ; his death occurred September, 1774, and great doubts were entertained as to whether his demise might not be due to poison. The memory of Ganganelli will live by the works by which he beautified and improved Rome. He emulated his predecessors in his love for art, and besides many important excavations he laid the foundation of the Vatican Museum.

The refusal of the Pope to recognise Prince Charles and his wife as sovereigns in no ways minimised their position. The "Regina Apostolorum," as she was affectionately called by the Romans, owing to her home being close to the church of the Santi Apostoli, soon became a general favourite, and won all hearts. Her presence changed the whole aspect of the old palace to the eyes of Charles, who on arriving there



By permission of Count Marefoschi.

**THE ROOM PUT AT CHARLES EDWARD'S DISPOSAL IN PALAZZO
MAREFOSCHI, WITH PART OF THE BED.**



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a few years previously had found it dull and gloomy ; but it was now lit up by the smiles and affection of his wife, whose kind disposition radiated through the house.

Bonstetten was one of the earliest visitors of note to Palazzo Muti, and describes the Countess d'Albanie as she then was in 1773 :—

“ The Queen of Hearts when I knew her in Rome was of medium height, she had dark blue eyes, a slightly turned-up nose, and the complexion of an English girl. Her expression was bright and piquant, and at the same time so sympathetic, that she turned all heads.”

Charles Victor Bonstetten, born in Berne, 1745, was a writer and philosopher ; he is chiefly remembered as one of the last writers of the eighteenth century who have left us works combining culture, intelligence, and charm of language. He was a contemporary of Madame de Staël and Sismondi, and during his early travels in Italy came to Rome shortly after the arrival of the Count and Countess d'Albanie. Having been presented to them, he was cordially received as one of the most intimate guests. Bonstetten mentions that Charles Edward was a good talker and very amiable ; and the Prince on his side was pleased to find that Bonstetten could converse in English, which was an exception amongst his *entourage* in Rome ; and he was still further delighted to perceive that he was a sympathetic listener, when he related anecdotes of his past adventures and ex-

pedition. Charles had the talent of interesting his hearers, and by his choice of language brought all the scenes of his success and despair vividly before them. He had formed the strange habit of ending each sentence with *ha capito?* (do you understand?), as if to assure himself that those listening were attending to him.

Bonstetten was particularly struck by the loyal terms in which he spoke of his enemies, without a word of bitterness or rancour; this generosity towards those who had done them harm was always a characteristic of the Stuarts.

The Court went every evening to the theatre, but held very little society at home; though occasionally a few friends gathered to play games of "faro" and "tarocchi," and the evening was now and again varied with music.

Whilst Bonstetten felt a sincere friendship for Charles Edward, he found a warmer sentiment rapidly growing towards Countess d'Albanie, and though he naively says, "I did not admit it to myself," he became deeply in love with the "Queen of Hearts" as he gracefully named her. He was the first of her numerous admirers who not only paid their homage to her personal attractions, but conferred on her the much higher compliment of appreciation of her high culture and mental capacities, which gave her the privilege of associating with the greatest thinkers of the day. Even from the earliest days of her marriage, at the age of twenty-two, her salon

never had the frivolous atmosphere that might be expected of a young woman commencing life. The thorough education of the convent at Mons had developed a nature of unusual intellectual resources. Her quickness of perception and thirst for knowledge had enabled her to profit by the interest and attention bestowed by her professors on such an apt pupil ; and when she left school she was well grounded with a store of knowledge which was to be her principal resource and comfort in her future disappointments and sorrow.

But all this learning was kept in the background and not insisted on, there was no trace of the pedant in her temperament or conversation ; on the contrary, she was very easy in her ways, and gave the impression of being far more French than German. She had high spirits, and was not altogether free from little malicious touches which, though almost imperceptible, were felt to be concealed under her witty remarks.

The first year of Louise d'Albanie's married life passed pleasantly enough. The Prince, surfeited though he was with both the pleasures and deceptions of his life, could not but feel her charm, and exacting though he was, he tried his best to please her. The advantages of the marriage were evidently entirely in his favour ; for the first time he felt the comfort of home life, and realised all that he had gained by the companionship of a wife whose influence and touch banished the feeling of loneliness with which

he had been so constantly oppressed. Owing to this improved condition in his material existence, he gained sufficient energy to overcome the moral apathy into which he had fallen, and to a great extent gave up drinking.

Nevertheless, from the early days of their union the tendency to unreasonable jealousy was evident in the Prince's demeanour towards his wife. Fortunately for him she was of an unusually sweet disposition, and therefore in the early stages of their life together there were no disputes to mar the exceptionally calm atmosphere. He never allowed his wife out of his sight a moment, and accompanied her to all the receptions and parties.

Entertainments were frequently given by the rival ambassadors of France and Spain, Cardinal de Bernis and Count Florila Blanca; each considered himself of equal importance both politically, and as patrons of art and literature. Those of the leading nobility of Rome who did not entertain on a large scale followed the still prevailing custom of receiving on a fixed evening, and Count and Countess d'Albanie were welcome guests in the houses of the Santa Croce, Patrizzi, and Bolognetti-Cenci.

Besides the distractions of general society, she had favourable opportunities of cultivating persons with whom she could converse on the subjects that most interested her. Amongst other well-known names in Rome at that time it is sufficient to mention Raphael Mengs, the Bohemian painter, who, by

thoughtful study of the great Italian masters, gained for himself the title of the Raphael of Germany. Owing to his health he passed many years of his life in Italy, and though most of his works are to be seen in the galleries of Dresden, Madrid, and the Louvre, his greatest production is considered that of "Apollo on Parnassus," in the Villa Albani. Angelica Kauffmann was also in Rome, where she passed the remaining years of her life; and though she did not attain in Italy the brilliant success that marked her career in England, yet she was recognised as a graceful originator of design. She left many works in Rome to testify to her facility of production; and had there been greater accuracy in the drawing she would have established for herself a still more notable fame.

Amongst literary men Hippolyte Pindemonte and Cordara were making a name in the world of future writers. The former, born in Verona, though at the time of which we are writing did not give promise of the celebrity he attained later, is now placed in the category of one of the most pleasing of the Italian poets of the eighteenth century, and was a dramatic author as well; we shall frequently have occasion to mention him at a later period of the Countess d'Albanie's life. When he knew her first in Rome he was only twenty-five, but was encouraged by her interest in his career; whilst Cordara, a Piedmontese, was doubly welcome, as he had written in Latin verse an account of Charles Edward's expedition to Scotland.

The friends in the north were quite satisfied at the gratifying reports from Rome, and Bishop Gordon remarked, in writing to Bishop Forbes,—

“I had a very pleasing account of Cousin Peggy ; she was in health and high spirits, and very happy in her new companion. They appear frequently abroad together, and are much respected and caressed by all ranks of people.”

The little clan in the north, who were interested in all that concerned the welfare of Prince Charles, did not content themselves with mere descriptions of the Princess’s appearance, and repeatedly asked for “a picture, a drawing, or a print of the charming Louisa.” The prints, after much impatient waiting, at last arrived in England, and Bishop Forbes was able to inform Bishop Gordon, 4th August, 1773 : “Prints cast off in Rome are now selling in London, a number of them are to be in Edinburgh by the first ship that offers” ; and a few days later he enclosed to Bishop Gordon a copy of the following verses, written by an anonymous Jacobite :—

“Upon seeing a print of the Queen of Hearts,
31st August, 1773.

‘Long seemed despair and fear with fiercest rage
To blot the annals of the coming age ;
But now with joy the sons of freedom see
Their long-lost hopes and wishes live in thee.’

“N.B. The above appears in our newspapers and magazines here, and ’tis hoped it may do so in those of London. The print is nobly designed and handsomely executed.”¹

¹ *Lyon in Mourning*, p. 287.

Though the above verses are not a model of style and cannot claim any merit of versification, they are only quoted as showing the renewed interest and revived hopes of the Jacobite party. The marriage of Charles Edward, and still more the favourable report as to his improved health, and more dependable line of conduct, influenced the easily fluctuating sympathy of the people, and there were many signs that indicated a desire to revert to the House of Stuart.

A new club had been founded in Edinburgh under the name of the Royal Oak. The badge of those who were members was a sovereign, whose head was adorned with a blue bonnet having a medal in front of it, on which were the words, "THE ROYAL OAK," and round the upper part of the medal, in a segment of the circle, was inscribed, "PRO REGE ET PATRIA." This club met for the first time 7th February, 1772, and consisted of the President, who was designated as "the Sovereign," a Secretary, Treasurer, and several members. At all the meetings the principal theme of discussion concerned the most efficacious means to effect the restoration of the House of Stuart.

Contemporaneous with this revival of hopes in Edinburgh a strong current spread through London. Destiny seemed once more to be shaping events to the advantage of the Jacobites. The mismanagement of affairs concerning politics in America had damaged the popularity that attended the early part of George III.'s reign.

The ineffectual attempts of Pitt and Burke to modify the harsh measures passed by Parliament led, as we know, to the emancipation of the American colonists, concluding with the treaty signed at Versailles, in 1783, by which Great Britain recognised the independence of her American colonies.

But before this date a storm had been gradually brewing, connected with certain advantages conceded to the Roman Catholics, who for a long period of time had been consigned entirely to the background. England considered it diplomatic to gain their good will, owing to the unsettled state of foreign politics, and repealed some of the laws by which bishops and priests had been withheld from exercising their functions for fear of disturbances.

These concessions, trifling though they may appear, were sufficient to raise the old cry of "No Popery," and the fanaticism of years gone by broke out with all the greater malignancy from having been so long repressed.

This disturbed state of public feeling set the most improbable rumours flying concerning Prince Charles.

One report asserted that he had received pressing invitations from America to accept the reins of government, but that he had refused to consider the proposal unless he could depend on the support of France and Spain. On the other hand, it was affirmed that he would not decline to take the oath of allegiance and supremacy in England to gain a kingdom he so intensely longed to govern.

The old Jacobite songs were heard once more, and at the sounds of "Over the water to Charlie" and "The King shall enjoy his own again," sung at a club in the neighbourhood of St. James's, the friends without doors paused as they heard the familiar inspiring strains, and joined in the chorus.¹

But, as on former occasions, this outburst of popular enthusiasm was ephemeral: there was no solid foundation to work on, the House of Hanover was too firmly established to be shaken, and though there was a certain amount of discontent and dissension that culminated in the Gordon Riots in 1780, the adherents of the Stuarts were too scattered and disorganised to enable them to do more than make these feeble demonstrations of loyalty.

Meanwhile the news from Italy always spoke favourably of Louise d'Albanie; in some letters she was spoken of as "the Sultana, one of the prettiest and most agreeable of her sex," and her talents as a musician were spoken of to Bishop Forbes: "I have been told that the most amiable of her sex is a notable performer in both vocal and instrumental art."

One of the reports from Italy purporting to be authentic, which had raised the hopes of the Oliphants and their friends more than any other rumours, was the one that announced to them Easter Eve, 1773, the prospect of an heir to Charles Edward. This news was given without any doubts being suggested as to its veracity, and therefore the disappointment was all

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 325.

the greater, when eventually there appeared to be no tangible assurance of the premature announcement. All the same, this was not the only report on the same subject. The rumour that spread to Scotland almost coincides with the strange story in which a Scotch doctor relates his experiences in Italy, though the two reports proceeded from totally different sources. The circumstances occurred near Pisa, in August, 1774 ; Charles Edward and his wife resided there previous to proceeding to Florence, where they proposed to make a lengthened stay. They had left Rome owing to the Prince's inability to reconcile himself to the thoughts that at the approaching Jubilee of Clement XIV. he would not be granted the position he claimed as Sovereign. His departure from Rome closed the epoch of his life in that city, as he only returned there after many years' absence, shortly before his death.

The narrative in connection with the report of the birth of a Stuart heir is thus related by Dr. Beaton, a young Scotch doctor well known for his attachment to the cause. He happened to be in the neighbourhood when Charles Edward and his wife inhabited a villa on the road between Pisa and Parma, close to a convent dedicated to Santa Rosalia. One evening, when the doctor was visiting the church attached to the convent, as was often his habit towards sunset, he was accosted by a stranger, who inquired if he was Dr. Beaton ; on being answered affirmatively, the stranger told him that his services were required immediately, and led the way out of the church to a carriage waiting

at the door. The doctor was requested to get in, and was followed by the mysterious person, who, as soon as he was seated, pulled down the carriage blinds, and taking a handkerchief from his pocket asked permission to bandage the doctor's eyes. Upon the doctor's demurring and refusing to comply, the stranger entreated him to agree to this request, as the secrecy of his mission concerned the most distinguished, and at the same time the most unfortunate, of all the Jacobites. The doctor's curiosity on hearing this was roused, and rather enjoying the prospect of an adventure, he consented to the conditions requested of him.

After a long drive, he felt that they had turned off the main road on to a gravel approach announcing a park or garden entrance; and after another few moments, the carriage pulled up and the doctor was helped out and led into a house. His eyes were still bandaged, but he surmised by the soft carpets and the flood of light of which he was conscious even with his eyes closed, that he was in no mean abode.

After many rooms and corridors had been traversed, judging from the endless turns taken either to right or left, he was brought to a standstill. He next heard a few hurried words of German exchanged by his strange companion and another person, after which his eyes were unbound.

On becoming gradually accustomed to the brilliantly lighted apartment, he found himself in a large saloon panelled with crimson damask, on which hung portraits of the Chevalier de St. Georges and of the

Duke of Perth. He was not given much time to look round, as the same gentleman approached, and announced to him that the principal reason for his visit had failed, as the lady who required his assistance had been prematurely confined ; but all the same, her friends would like to be reassured by the doctor that she was progressing satisfactorily.

Before Dr. Beaton had time to reply, the door of the adjoining room was opened, and he was shown into a bedroom at the end of which sat a nurse holding a baby on her knees, almost hid in masses of lace and silk coverings. She made signs to him to advance to the bed in the centre of the room. On opening the curtains he found a lady propped up by pillows, who at once struck him by her exceptionally refined and gentle expression ; he felt her pulse, and finding it very feeble and beating irregularly, he asked for pen and ink to write a prescription. On sitting down at the writing-table in the next room he involuntarily gave a start to see close to the inkstand a miniature of Charles Edward. This movement of surprise appeared to have been noticed by the gentleman who was standing near him, as before he left the house he was sworn to secrecy, and then reconducted to his home in the same way as he had been brought on this nocturnal expedition, without a word of explanation being offered him.

Shortly after the above-mentioned incidents, Dr. Beaton was embarking for England from Leghorn, and the same gentleman who had conducted him in

secrecy to the villa drove up with a woman, who carried a bundle in her arms, and helped her into the launch waiting to convey the passengers to the English frigate. This circumstance gave rise to the report that Charles Edward had had a son and heir whom it was necessary to keep concealed from the English Government, as a reward of £40,000 had been offered for the "Pretender's" head. The question led to a great deal of controversy ; for while it was a matter of supreme importance to the Stuarts to announce a fact which might completely alter the established succession to the throne of England, it was equally difficult to prove a case so violently denied by their antagonists, owing to the necessity of concealment consequent on the menaces of the Government should there be a claimant of the line of Stuart. The most acceptable truth on the matter is that of the best authorities, who deny that the Prince ever had a child by Louisa Stolberg, though at a later period of our story we shall have occasion to allude to a different version of this question.

At the end of October, 1774, we find Count and Countess d'Albanie established in Florence. No sooner did Prince Corsini hear of their arrival, than he came forward and placed at their disposal one of his palaces for as long as it was agreeable to the Count and Countess to grant him this honour. The palace he offered for their use was situated away from the centre of the town near the Orti Oricellari, close to one of the gates, and within easy reach of the country.

This trait of hospitality came from a family who had always been foremost amongst the Florentines to show their respect and sympathy for the Stuarts. When Charles Edward was in Florence during his early youth, the Corsini had always welcomed him to their house ; and now, after thirty-nine years had elapsed, and he returned to them an exile and ill in health, they came forward with the same cordiality as had been shown him when, with the anticipation of a brilliant career, he had contributed to the success of the receptions in their Palazzo.

None better than the Corsini could dispense hospitality to royalty. First mentioned as far back as the thirteenth century, this family rapidly rose to high positions and played an important part in ecclesiastical history ; they could boast not only of cardinals and other Church dignitaries in their family, but in 1730 the choice of Pope fell on one of their house, and he was elected to the Holy See as Clement XII.

The magnificence of their palaces in both Rome and Florence corresponded to their lavish style of living, and by connection with the Barberini, Strozzi, Borromei, Gaetani, Odescalchi, and many other notabilities it devolved on them to fulfil the duties of the principal house in Florence.

The Grand Duke of Tuscany at that time was Leopold, second son of Francis I. and Maria Theresa of Austria ; his wife was Marie Louise of Spain. His position at Florence until he succeeded to the Imperial throne on the death of his eldest brother

was not one to be envied. The Florentines still bore in mind the palmy days of the Medici, and though twenty-eight years had passed since the extinction of the race by the death of John Gaston, yet the new system of government of the town was severely resented by the people ; nevertheless no one was more capable of the management of affairs than the Grand Duke Leopold, and by his energy, capacity, and unwearying activity, he passed many measures advantageous to the town, and made necessary reforms that had been overlooked by the Medici princes.

The Grand Ducal family let the arrival of the Count and Countess pass in silence ; but though they were ignored by the Grand Duke, they constantly met at dinners and receptions officials connected with the Court, many of whom called and paid their respects to Prince Charles.

On the part of the ladies there were not the same marks of civility, as the Countess could not bring on herself to give up all claims to royalty, and refused to return their visits. This offended the Florentine ladies, and soon none of them called on her.

Except for a momentary annoyance that she should not be shown the respect she considered due to her rank, the Countess was indifferent as to whether the ladies called or not. She much preferred the society of men with whom she could converse on interesting topics, instead of having to waste her time in making conversation with women who, generally speaking,

were considerably her inferiors in culture and intelligence.

She felt all the greater need of cultivating her literary pursuits, an unfailing source of joy to her, as her domestic life was by no means free of disappointment and sadness.

Even at the opening of her married life the word happiness could hardly be mentioned in connection with her union with Charles Edward ; but for a certain time we have seen that the novelty of the situation had a beneficial effect on him, and distracted him from thoughts that hitherto had been entirely centred on himself, and with a selfish sentiment of proprietorship he devoted himself entirely to his wife.

She on her side was pleased at his attentions and liked her position as wife of a sovereign, even though unrecognised as such. By her sweet temper and self-control, she delayed the dissensions that were bound to come to ruin Charles's own happiness and that of others.

These disputes originated with his return to drinking, the most painful of all the humiliations to which he exposed his young wife. The cessation had been but temporary, and not only did he degrade himself at home in his wife's presence when he ill-treated her, and in fits of unjustifiable jealousy locked her up in her room, but what she felt still more, heedless to all appeals, he insisted on going each night to the theatre, and compelled her to accompany him. There

she had to assist at the humiliating scene of her husband being lifted from the carriage in a state of inebriation and laid by his two servants on a sofa in the box, where he slept during most of the representation, or called for some of the wine which he always ordered to be placed by his side.

Matters gradually assumed proportions beyond the strength of Countess d'Albanie's resistance, and consequently a rupture was inevitable. But before reaching the crisis that led to her release, she had more to suffer and endure than can well be imagined ; indeed, the accounts might be considered exaggerated, were it not for what we know had previously occurred with Miss Walkinshaw and other women, through Charles Edward's violent temper.

At one of the masked balls nothing would prevent him from mixing with the crowd and dancing a minuet with a young girl who took his fancy, to amuse the spectators. He was so intoxicated on this particular occasion, that Count Spada, one of his suite, had to stand close to him all the time he was dancing, to prevent him from falling.

Sir Horace Mann, who had treated the Prince's marriage with indifference and almost contempt, had been asked by Walpole for the prints or portraits of the Count and Countess, on their arrival in Florence. The English envoy's answer corroborates the small esteem in which Charles was held : "There is no print either good or bad of the drunken Chevalier, nor has any been made of his wife, who

will be condemned to live alone with him, for he is drunk half the day and mad the other half."

It was during this unfortunate state of affairs that the Count and Countess left the Corsini Palace, and moved to another part of the town. Charles had often expressed a wish to have a home of his own in Florence, and after looking round for a suitable house, he decided to buy the Palazzo Guadagni, in the quiet street of San Sebastiano, near the Church of the Annunziata.

On entering the outer hall, visitors may still see over the archway of the broad staircase the royal arms of Great Britain with the inscription : "CAROLUS NATUS 1720 M. BRIT. ET HIBERNIAE REX FIDEI DEFENSOR 1766," a sad reminder of a short era of grandeur, the close of which had lost the principal features of regal attributes. On the roof, the weathercock, formed in the letters "C. R. 1777," seems equally to recall his easily vacillating nature, always ready to veer with the last wind that blew. If we stroll into the garden, in which the gravel walks are so overgrown with weeds and grass as to be barely distinguishable, we see all round us mutilated statues of gods and goddesses lying in silent protestation at the helplessness of their position, and if we glance up at the heavily grated windows of the palace overlooking this desolate wilderness, our hearts sink as we picture to ourselves the dramas that took place in this house that represented to Louise d'Albanie but a gilded prison. Neither lovely views from the balcony looking on

the hills of Fiesole, nor the comforts of a luxurious establishment, could compensate for her loss of happiness, as well as for a feeling of anxiety, not entirely devoid of fear, at the endless scenes with her husband on little or no provocation.

With the renewal of the Prince's intemperate habits, not only did his temper increase in violence, but his health became considerably aggravated ; the old symptoms of dropsy assumed serious proportions, and while his appetite commenced to fail, his craving for stimulants was insatiable.

Mann, who was always ready to exaggerate any news detrimental to the Stuart Princes, informed Walpole : "The Count has frequent epileptic fits, which his physician has told me must end in apoplexy, and that he does not think it distant. He is jealous to such a degree of his wife that she is never out of his sight ; all the avenues to her room, excepting through his own, are barricaded : the reason he gives for this is, that the succession may never be dubious."

This was the state of affairs in Palazzo Guadagni in 1779, but the autumn of that year was to be a memorable one to Louise d'Albanie by reason of her unexpected acquaintanceship with a man of congenial temper, who, by his lasting friendship and affection, was to bring a fresh interest into her blighted life. The day that Vittorio Alfieri made her his bow of introduction was for ever after associated in her mind as the milestone leading her on the road to that happiness for which she had hitherto searched in vain.

Alfieri was born at Asti, in Piedmont, in 1749, and was therefore in the thirtieth year of his age when he met the woman to whom he “bound himself in chains of gold voluntarily forged.”

His life, written by himself in 1790, enables us to study a most complex character, of which one of the principal features was an inordinate vanity, with the accompanying disposition of envy. He first showed these tendencies, which are the stepping-stones to ambition, at the age of eight, when he would shed tears of rage if any of his schoolfellows succeeded better than he did in their studies.

Brilliant though his career had been at school and college, when he outstepped his companions by a long way, he had not given, up to the time that we bring him to our reader’s notice, any startling proofs to indicate that his name would live as that of the greatest tragic poet in Italy.

His father had died when he was quite a boy; and as soon as he came of age, and could dispose of a very comfortable fortune, his life was alternately passed in wild dissipations, in which he recklessly spent large sums, always led by the predominating feeling that no one must surpass him in luxury; or with the contradiction that dictated his actions, he would suddenly leave his companions of pleasure and disappear to some remote village in Tuscany, where, during the few hours he did not devote to study, he would be seen galloping wildly across country on one of his favourite horses he had bought on his first

visit to England, his red hair blowing in the wind. His love of horses was a lasting passion ; he often had as many as eight in the stables at a time, and he used to look after them with greatest care and attention. He often talked to the horses, and the most difficult of them became perfectly docile and tractable in the hands of their kind master.

His disposition to envy, and the overbearing desire to surpass others, was largely responsible for the durability of his attachment to the Countess. His was by no means a constant nature ; he easily fell desperately in love, but wearied equally quick of the sirens who had charmed him, whereas now he tells us—

“ I found that I had at last met the woman for whom I had been searching, who instead of being like all the others I had known, an obstacle to literary fame, an impediment to useful occupations, and a detriment to all elevated thoughts, was an incentive and a noble example to every great work, and I, recognising and appreciating such a rare treasure, gave myself up entirely to her.”¹

Was it to be wondered at if Countess d’Albanie on her side, weary of acting as sick-nurse to a man who only responded to her care by insults, who tormented her with scenes of unjustifiable jealousy, and who continually wounded her feelings of delicacy by appearing in public when in an unpresentable condition, should respond to one who, besides possessing

¹ *Vita di Alfieri*, p. 201.

the intellectual capacities which alone constituted a great attraction to her, was at the same time full of tact and sympathy for a woman in distress?

The day that Alfieri crossed her path and reciprocated all her tastes and aims was the dawn of a happy future to Louise d'Albanie. The darkness of night was slowly disappearing, and the mists of early morn were dispersing the heavy gloom: she felt a subtle transformation weaving a spell in harmony with her aspirations, and she recalled a dispute with Bonstetten when she laughingly denied any capacity to love seriously, followed by a letter in which she went so far as to tell him, "if I found a man full of originality I should love him always."¹ These words enable us to form the opinion that her intimacy with Alfieri was founded, as was his love for her, entirely on intellectual sympathies.

The rôle of *cavaliere servente* was a recognised position in Italy at that day: it implied the constant attendance of a man on a lady, and his attention to all her wishes and requests, and might equally be a platonic tie or bond of warmer sentiments: that question was left in the hands of the *cavaliere* and his lady, it was no concern of others: for them it was sufficient to know that no criticisms could be passed detrimental to their social position.

Therefore whilst Charles Edward was lying asleep, or drunk at the back of his box at the theatre, Alfieri, as Countess d'Albanie's *cavaliere servente*, occupied the

¹ Lettres à Bonstetten, 9 Juin, 1775.

seat of honour next her, before the eyes of all the Florentine society. By some inexplicable contradiction, notwithstanding his jealous nature, Prince Charles seemed not only to accommodate himself to the rôle played by Alfieri, but found him very sympathetic. This enabled the poet to come and go to the house as much as pleased him; and when in the evening, Charles was lying in a half-comatose state near the fireplace in the large room of Palazzo Guadagni, Alfieri, seated at a table at the furthest end, would be absorbed in his work inspired by the presence of his "Muse," to whom he dedicated his *Maria Stuarda*, the first tragedy written under her pervading influence—"to you, to you only, do I dedicate the best part of my life."

Even had these two friends so wished it, there could hardly have been occasions for any greater intimacy, knowing as we do of the Prince's jealousy, which was also confirmed by Alfieri, who says—

"In the nine years or more that the Count and Countess lived together, never, no never, did he once go out without her, nor she without being accompanied by him; such a bondage would have wearied even the most devoted lovers."¹

For a certain time this idyll ran an uninterrupted course. With Alfieri near to protect and sympathise with her, the Countess became almost indifferent to wearisome disputes with her husband. Though showing him the same devotion and attention as formerly,

¹ *Vita*, p. 200.

she was enabled to bear his unkindness and selfishness with more courage; for the sympathy that he had rejected was now given to another, and her heart had gone out to a man who was worthy of it. But it was inevitable that this strange combination should one day or other have a termination; and Alfieri's inspirations, as well as Countess d'Albanie's placid contentment, were unexpectedly troubled by a more serious quarrel with Charles Edward than those, to which everyone had now become accustomed.

Before, however, entering into the details of the dispute that led to a final rupture with her husband, it is necessary to give a few moments' attention to the Cardinal of York, Bishop of Frascati, who found himself called on to be arbitrator in the deplorable quarrels between his brother and sister-in-law.

CHAPTER V

THE CARDINAL OF YORK

Description of Frascati—The Tusculanum—Expected arrival of the Cardinal—Ceremonies on his arrival—The episcopal palace—Testimony to the Cardinal's work—Reception of the Pope—Disaster during a banquet—The Cardinal's hospitality—Incident at a party in Rome—Anger of the Senator—Devotion of the people for the Cardinal—He finds a library—The Pope puts the Jesuits' seminary in his hands—The Cardinal appealed to on the quarrels between his brother and sister-in-law—She abandons Charles Edward—Is called to Rome by the Pope—Inhabits the Cardinal's palace—The Malatesta papers—Monsignor Cesarini—Letters pass between the Cardinal and the Countess—Alfieri comes to Rome.

ON the slopes of the Laziale range of hills, sheltered from wintry blasts and the burning summer heat, stands the little town of Frascati, the favourite country resort of both Romans and strangers ever since days gone by. The name Frascati is said to be derived from the word *frasche*, or "branches," with which those of the inhabitants who remained without shelter owing to demolitions under Pope Celestine III., in 1191, made huts for their habitations. The word *frasche* strikes the ear with a pleasant sound, and brings before us a feeling of cool green shade in a hot climate.

It is situated below the ancient Tusculum, founded as legend tells us by Telegonus, the son of Ulysses

and Circe. If we go back to the days of yore, we read that the grounds belonging to Lucullus are supposed to have covered the whole extent of the present town of Frascati.

It is well known that that illustrious personage, whose magnificence became proverbial, preferred his "Villa Tuscolana" to all his other possessions, and decorated it with such excessive luxury that he was reproved for his extravagance, even by his friends not less prodigal than himself. Plutarch and Pliny tell us that in this abode Lucullus adopted without limit or reserve the luxurious splendour of the Asia he had conquered, and was himself an example of the truism that the people he had subjugated were the real conquerors, as, though vanquished by the Romans, they had communicated to the victorious foe their vices.¹

Pliny and other historians give lengthened descriptions of the decorations of this villa and of the immense collection of valuable statues and pictures. They also mention that the numerous edifices he erected for the purpose of housing these fabulous treasures he had brought back from his successful expeditions called forth public censure. The library occupied an important part of his villa, and this led to frequent visits from Cicero, who found in it invaluable works for his studies.

The site of the historical "Tusculanum" of Cicero is reached by the Via dei Cappucini; the straggling

¹ Seghetti, *Tuscolo e Frascati*, p. 90. Roma, 1891.

stony footpath leads us past a Franciscan monastery, and thence to the “Valle (or valley) di Cicerone.” In this valley are seen traces of an amphitheatre, where Cicero held his school or academy. The villa in which he lived is believed to have been near Grotta Ferrata ; this situation was chosen by him as being further away from interruptions, and a peaceful retreat where he could obtain greater repose after the fatigues of the school.

Cicero was still in his Tusculanum when he received the order of banishment. It was with pain and grief that he had to say farewell to the well-loved Tusculan Hills ; and during his long exile in Thessalonica he sighed for his home in the valley of the Laziale.

It was not only Cicero who on looking up to heaven blessed the fate that had led him to Tusculum. We find after him Strabo, the illustrious geographer, writing a poetic description of the hills of “Tuscolo, on which,” he says, “is the well-built town. The houses and woods around them descend in gradation in the direction of Rome. Tusculanum is a fertile hill with an abundance of good water. Many villas of regal splendour are situated on the verdant slopes.”¹

This brief description of the shady groves and peaceful valleys surrounding Frascati may convey to us the attraction of the place—a sentiment not confined to the philosophers of old, but fully shared by those who now still frequent the wooded country between Frascati and Albano. And amongst those

¹ Seghetti, p. 78.

of our time no one felt the charm and poetry of the spot more than Henry Duke of York, whose appointment by Clement XIII. as bishop of the diocese led to Frascati being his country residence.

So strong became his predilection for the primitive little town and its rural surroundings, that, like Cicero, he grieved sincerely when at a later date his nomination to the bishopric of Velletri entailed absence from Frascati, and as soon as he had performed the necessary duties of his office, he returned to his favourite spot and to the people who shared his grief whenever he was forced to absent himself from them.

The Pope had previously, in 1758, conferred the title of Archbishop of Corinth in partibus on the Cardinal of York, but, anxious to show him a still further favour, three years later he appointed him Bishop of Frascati. This is one of the four *suburbicari* or suburban bishoprics near Rome. The remaining three are Albano, Porta Ruffina, and Ostia, to which Velletri is added. After officiating as Bishop of Frascati for a long period of years, the Cardinal was promoted to the diocese of Ostia and Velletri, the most important of the four bishoprics.

It was on the occasion of the Cardinal's first visit to Frascati to take up residence in the Palazzo Vescovile, or Bishop's Palace, that the usually apathetic population of the place showed abnormal signs of animation. On a hot July afternoon of 1761 all the townsfolk had donned their best attire ; the women from La

Riccia, Albano, and other villages round formed groups of bright colour in their gay costumes reserved for a *festa* and other great occasions. It consisted of a red or blue skirt worn with a white body and black corsets ; an embroidered apron, and white head-dress with the ends falling square, completed the costume. They varied in quality and expense, and those wearing any with exceptionally elaborate trimmings or whose coral necklace and earrings attracted greater attention than others, did not escape sarcastic remarks and flashing glances of envy from their less gaudily dressed friends.

The men on their side were not going to allow the women to monopolise all the admiration, and in their white shirts, dark breeches, coloured stockings, and brigand peaked hats passed muster in their holiday attire.

Animated groups thronged the Piazza of the Duomo, erected in 1700 by Innocent XII.; others were gathered round the splashing fountain, the sound of falling water striking pleasantly on the ear this sultry afternoon ; but to those dark-eyed mountain peasants, whose skin was tanned a deep hue by heat and air, the weather was immaterial : they had gathered together to welcome a royal guest, and he was the only topic of their lively chatter as they stood or sat round the little "Osteria," gaily decorated with laurel leaves and coloured scarves, where the landlord of the "Vini dei Castelli" was doing a busy trade. "Baiocchi," or pennies, fell from

every side into his hand, and the thirsty villagers drank hastily the wines of Marino and Albano, and asked for more.

Meanwhile the sun was getting low on the horizon, the Piazza was almost entirely in shade save the corner where the dazzling evening light fell on the cathedral and fountain that stand at right angles with each other, and seemed to produce a greater glare than the sun of the earlier hours of the day. Very soon the Piazza and its attractions was abandoned by the agitated population, who welcomed these signs of declining day as heralding the arrival so impatiently wished for.

They congregated on the road where a splendid panorama extends in a wide expanse from the Sabine range on the right, to the seashore on the left. In the centre of the picture, the dome of St. Peter's is distinctly visible ; it proudly rises above the lower part of the church, the outlines of which are lost in the gathering darkness, and it assumes with grandeur the protection of the city.

The whole plain is bathed in evening light. In the foreground the ruins and isolated aqueducts of the Campagna stand out from the surrounding pastures ; the middle distance is softly veiled in the haze produced by the intense heat, and in the background the far-away hills are only just perceptible ; though here and there a faintly visible outline or shadow, transparent as a soft vaporous chiffon, reminds us that the well-known range is behind the fast-falling drapery of night.

The sun lingered yet a few moments longer before disappearing behind the sea-line, and during this farewell of the short Italian gloaming, the white road winding below Frascati was lit up with golden rays, out of which rose clouds of illuminated dust. So dense was it, that it might have presaged the advance of an invading force, and not the bearer of peace.

It was barely possible to distinguish the dark masses of coaches and horsemen ; only by flashes of light on the breastplates of a bodyguard, was the idea of a procession conveyed to the spectator.

But this indefinitely advancing mass was enough for the expectant country folk, and not content to wait till the procession should reach the town, with hurried steps and loud vociferations they ran down the hill to hasten their greeting to the newly appointed Bishop. He entered the town amidst the acclamations of his flock, and was thus escorted to the episcopal palace of La Rocca, where the Canons of the College, the magistrate, and principal residents of the place were assembled to offer him their submission and homage.

The following day had been decided on for the ceremony attendant on the Cardinal taking solemn possession of his functions. From every window looking on the Piazza were hanging draperies of damasks, and silks of gorgeous colours, and in front of the cathedral a beautifully decorated archway had been put up ; the interior, though not striking in itself, was noticeable for the general effect of har-

monious tone. The aisles were lined with the militia of the province, and cuirassiers.

At the appointed hour the Bishop drove up to the church door in a coach-and-six, followed by his court in other carriages. On his way he had stopped at the Palazzo Carpegna, where he received a deputation of the municipality and magistrates.

Amidst cries and increasing enthusiasm he alighted from his coach at the cathedral door, and kneeling down on a gold-embroidered cushion kissed the crucifix held before him by a priest. He then entered the building, and after he had been robed in pontifical vestments he was escorted up the church by the confraternities and other orders.

During this time the organ pealed, a chorale was sung, and the people crowding into the cathedral acclaimed the Bishop as he mounted the episcopal throne. After the ceremony was ended he was escorted back to the palace, and in the evening Frascati and all the villages round were lit up with torches, bonfires, and any lights that were at hand. The façade of the cathedral and the fountain glittered in the blaze of coloured fires and rockets. Every imaginable musical instrument was heard, wine flowed freely, and the people for a long time after remembered the arrival of the Cardinal of York. He also wishing to show his pleasure at having been appointed to live amongst them, distributed masses of blankets, clothing, and money to the poor; also with great generosity he subsidised numerous orders. Besides

these acts of charity, he presented beautiful vestments to the cathedral, and a jewelled chalice which is now used at solemn functions at St. Peter's in Rome.¹

The residence that the Cardinal inhabited had an historical interest. It dates from the twelfth century, and was lived in by warlike nobles in the Middle Ages. At that period the "Rocca" was the fortified castle of the little hamlet, round which were massed the houses which then constituted Frascati : the castle was called "La Rocca," from the rocky position it dominated.

As a rule, the nobles inhabiting the castle were allied with the Emperors against the Romans, and the skirmishes and fights in which they took part were unceasing. These repeated attacks only came to an end in 1191, under the pontificate of Celestine III., when the Romans took final possession of the fortress and reduced it to a state of ruin, chiefly out of revenge for a defeat inflicted on them by the Emperor Frederick I., in 1167.

Later on the Borgia were temporary holders of the Rocca. It is related that Alexander VI. made a present of it to his daughter, the famous Lucrezia Borgia, in 1498, to which gift he added sixty-one feudal properties taken from the Roman barons : she left it to her son Giovanni, under the guardianship of his uncle Cesare, the Duca Valentino. They appear to have fortified it anew, but as after the death of Alexander their fortune had greatly diminished, all

¹ *Cracas*, 1761.

the feudal rights were reclaimed by their legitimate owners.¹

Under the episcopate of the Cardinal of York, this residence, full of interesting traditions of warlike days, was to retain its importance, though the scenes of valour and prowess were closed.

On every side we see inscriptions in the palace recording improvements under the Cardinal's jurisdiction.

The first inscription meets our eye as we enter the courtyard. It is over a sarcophagus he had adapted as a fountain, and mentions that it was due to him that water had been brought to the castle.

On the way upstairs a large marble slab let into the wall recounts in Latin that he had received as his guests Charles Emmanuel, King of Sardinia, and Pius VII. at a sumptuous collation given in their honour.

An interesting pamphlet for private circulation only, by Professor Atti, Vicar-General of Frascati, gives us many anecdotes but little known regarding the Cardinal of York ; they are interesting, inasmuch as they serve to acquaint us with the customs of that time. Concerning this collation he relates that the Pope's visit was impromptu, as he thus wished to show his respect for the House of Stuart.

The Cardinal, however, had been privately informed of this intended visit, and bestirred himself to make suitable preparations for such an unexpected

¹ Seghetti, p. 253.

event. He met His Holiness three miles out of Frascati with three magnificent gala coaches. Pius VII. at once alighted from his own coach and got into the Cardinal's carriage, and notwithstanding his protestations of modesty, he insisted on the Cardinal occupying the seat next him.

At the entrance to Frascati the Pope was presented with the keys of the town, and then drove straight to the cathedral, where the King of Sardinia awaited him, and prostrated himself, and kissed the Pope's feet in homage. After a brief visit to the seminary, where he admired the codes and rare editions in the library, the Pope was served with refreshments.

He next went to the villa of Monsignor Cesarini, the Cardinal's secretary, where he was again regaled with a repast ; and finally he assisted at the banquet offered him at the palace, referred to on the tablet, seated between the King of Sardinia and the Cardinal.

After the collation he remained some time talking most amicably to the King and the Cardinal : he then took his leave, accompanied by the Duke of York as far as the outskirts of the town, and reached his capital before evening.

The next morning the Cardinal sent his chamberlain to inquire after the Pope's health, and the following Sunday he went personally to Rome to offer him his thanks and mark his appreciation of the visit.

As the large sums of money sent to the Cardinal from wealthy adherents of the Stuarts in France and other countries enabled him to lead a life in

which expense was no consideration, he entirely renewed the castle, which he found in a very bad state of repair, and adorned with rich altar ornaments the private chapel that still remains as he left it. The walls of his own spacious room in which he died, leading out of the chapel, are decorated with small medallions of cardinals and early dignitaries of the Church ; his own portrait is amongst them, and these commemorative portraits instituted by him are carried on in the present day.

Without doubt the old castle badly needed restoration ; for during one of the banquets he so constantly gave we are told that the floor suddenly gave way owing to a rotten beam, and in the midst of clouds of dust, and nearly suffocated with the plaster and débris, the Cardinal and all his guests were precipitated below. Fortunately the lower floor happened to be the well-stocked coach-house, and the beam remained partially supported by the carriages. The Cardinal alighted on the roof of one of his own coaches, where he remained seated till the people from outside, terrified by the noise, came and liberated both himself and his friends, who had fared worse than their host.

After such an experience the Cardinal thought it wiser to restore the castle from its foundations : the work was commenced at once at a great outlay, and thus it was made habitable for the Cardinal himself and his successors.

Oral tradition of his regal hospitality has been handed down to the present day, and not so very

many years ago there was still an old retainer who remembered tales of the “Cardinale degli Organi,” as the unsophisticated villagers pronounced his name.

He had a suite of forty, and as many horses in his stables ; his coach-and-six galloping full speed along the country lanes was well known for miles round : he rivalled Cardinal Bernis, the French ambassador, in the costliness of his equipages. The coachman one day ventured to call attention to the state of the badly kept roads after heavy rains, and said it would certainly kill the horses if he galloped them at the usual pace. The Cardinal replied it was a matter of complete indifference to him, as there were plenty of horses in the stables to replace those that died. If anything was needed for his entertainments, without delay a carriage was sent flying to Rome to fetch either ices, wines, or whatever was wanting ; his hospitality attained such fame, and the luxury of his table became so generally known, that everyone was anxious to profit by such unusual generosity, and none more so than the “galopini.” This word has now fallen into disuse : it implied at that time those who were always in search of dinners and amusements ; they were the first to arrive and the last to leave any parties or suppers, and pushed their way everywhere.

It was not only the Cardinal’s horses that suffered from the incessant gallops to Rome, but the running footmen, by whom he was preceded, found it hard work to keep up with the high-spirited steeds. One

of the runners, or *lacche*, as they were called, attained celebrity from his swift running, and from having resisted the fatigues to which the horses succumbed.

He went by the name of Gigi, or "il Moretto," and besides being fleet of foot, showed he could be cunning as well. The occasion presented itself at a large party given by Cardinal de Bernis at Palazzo Salviati in the Corso, to celebrate the birth of the Dauphin. There was an immense crowd in the Corso, and the narrow streets surrounding the embassy were blocked with the cumbersome coaches, each trying to be the first to reach the palace door. It happened that the Cardinal of York and the Senatrice Rezzonico, the niece of two popes and daughter of the Princess Piombino, who had assisted at Charles Edward's birth, drove up at the same moment from opposite directions. Both coachmen immediately whipped up their horses, and the Princess's carriage was on the point of passing first under the portico, when "il Moretto," highly indignant that his master should arrive second, without a moment's hesitation, threw the lighted torch he held in his hand between the legs of the Princess's horses : as might be expected, they began to plunge, and started back with fright ; this gave the chance to the Cardinal's coachman to whip up his horses more vigorously than before, and the Cardinal thus dashed in first.

But the lady, of whom he had taken precedence, who, besides being wife of the Senator, or Syndic of Rome, was accustomed to be made much of for her

looks and flattered for her wit, was mortally offended : she refused the seat of honour that had been reserved her at the reception ; and when the next day the Cardinal sent Monsignor Cesarini to offer her his excuses, she received him with great haughtiness, and curtly told him, "Inform His Eminence that his *lacche* will be flogged by my servants, and that he is far less of a gentleman than his brother, who, even though he claimed the throne of England, showed proper deference when he met the Duke of Gloucester." This refers to an incident at Genoa, where Charles Edward and the Duke of Gloucester happened to be both at the same time. In turning the corner of a street it is said they met face to face ; the Prince at once took off his hat and stood on one side to allow the Duke to pass, who politely returned his bow.¹

But it was not only as a popular entertainer that the Cardinal gained the affection of the inhabitants of Frascati. Besides attending to all their appeals and claims on his generosity, he encouraged them to work, and did his best to improve their condition by personal interest in their wishes and efforts to provide for themselves. Soon there was not a poor person left in Frascati or for miles round ; and with this advance in their material needs the Cardinal was able, as a next step towards progress, to influence them to control their violent passions and gradually to civilise them.

The greatest of all the Cardinal's works at Frascati

¹ *La Corte Romana*, Silvagni, vol. i. p. 95.

is the seminary, which is still standing to testify to his wish to improve the system of education in that college.

The seminary had been given by the town of Frascati to the Jesuits in 1701, with the intention that they should provide the youth of the place with a moral and literary education. When the Cardinal was elected to the bishopric great disorder reigned in the seminary ; and finding that the Jesuits were almost excluded from episcopal jurisdiction, he made a fervent appeal to Clement XIV. to separate the college from the seminary, of which he begged the complete control. Clement XIV., under whose pontificate the Jesuits were suppressed, readily granted the prayer of the Cardinal, who spent 12,000 crowns on necessary improvements, and purchased the next house with the intention of establishing commodious classrooms by means of the two buildings thrown into one.

The Pope not only disunited the seminary from the Jesuits' college, but put the whole institution under episcopal jurisdiction.

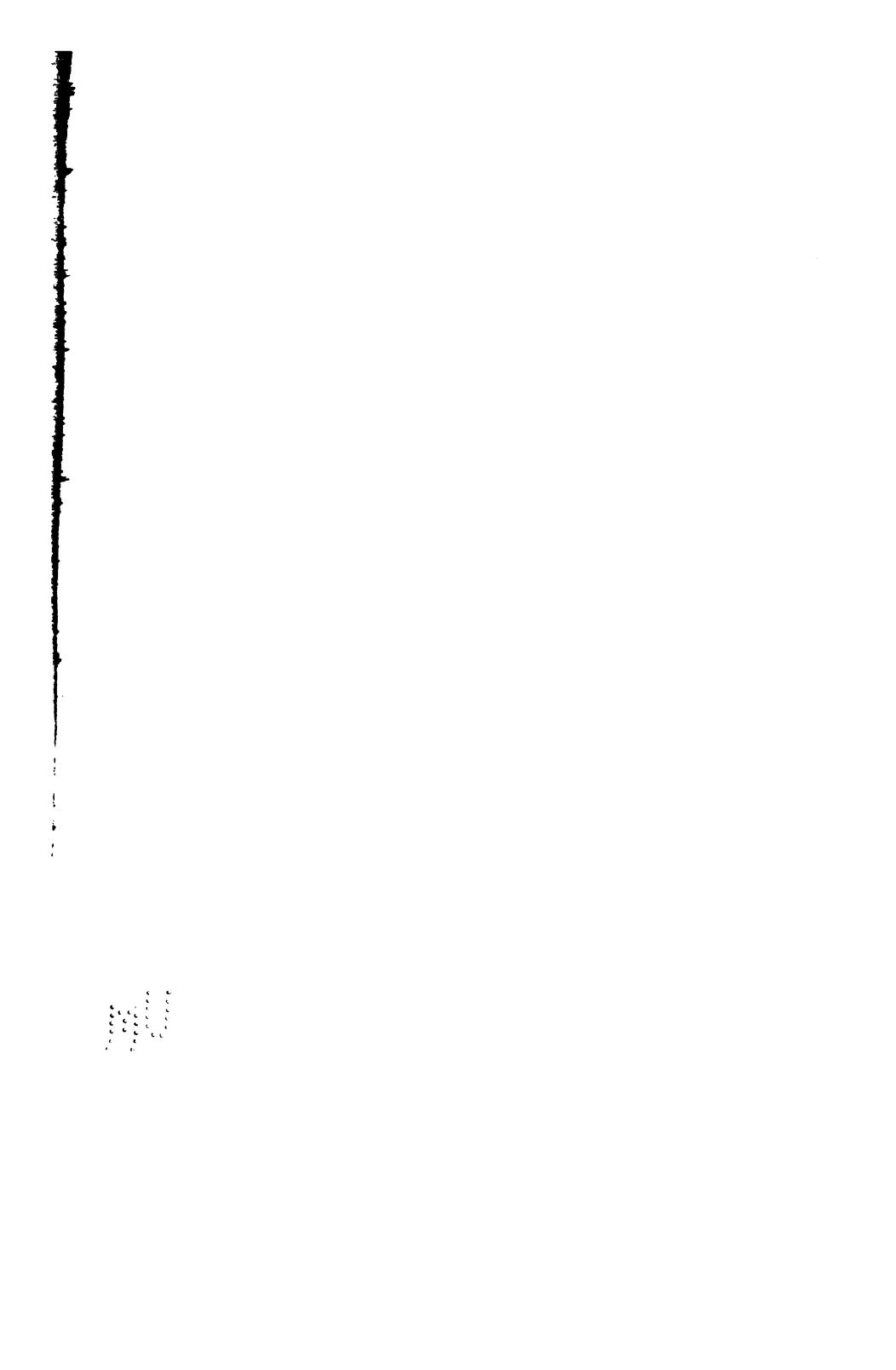
The church belonging to the Jesuits was also handed over to the seminary ; a tablet records the Cardinal's gratitude and thanks for the Pope's favour ; he also consecrated a chapel in the seminary and richly decorated it at his entire cost.

In 1774 he founded the fine library, and spared no expense to obtain rare editions and works in all languages and on all subjects. Amongst other valuable



By permission of Monsignor Mercanti.

THE CARDINAL OF YORK,
From the Bust in the Library at Frascati, founded by the
Cardinal of York.



books is a *Livre d'heures* belonging to Catherine de Medicis, richly bound in crimson velvet and illustrated with finely finished paintings, in one of which is her own portrait with Francis II. and Henry II. on either side of her. There is also a curious book, with the painted devices and mottoes of the Kings of Scotland, commencing from the days of Bruce down to James III. when Prince of Wales.

A well-executed marble bust of the donor is placed in a niche on one side of the room, and attracts attention by the striking reproduction of the well-known features of the House of Stuart. It is a less melancholy cast of countenance than that of his father and grandfather ; from what we can gather, he was of a less morbid disposition. This might be accounted for by his life of ease and repose, which contrasted greatly with the agitated and disappointed careers of his relatives.

Up to the last few years of his life the Cardinal had all the good things of this world—honours, wealth, and position. His face conveys to us his contentment and appreciation of his prosperity, and the placid expression reveals a nature eminently fitted for the vocation he had chosen. While enjoying the respect and sympathy of all who knew him, he was by no means brilliant : this general opinion was expressed in rather unflattering terms by Benedict XIV., who had raised him to the Cardinalate. The Pope, who was renowned for his witty sayings, had listened to the Cardinal's prosy conversation for an hour and a half, on

a day that he was unusually busy, and remarked with a sigh of relief at the conclusion of the audience, that it no longer surprised him the English should wish to be rid of the race of Stuarts if they were all as dull and tedious as the Cardinal.

Nevertheless we have seen that he enjoyed a great position at the papal Court, and was shown special favours by successive Popes ; for in any ecclesiastical affairs that he undertook, as in all that concerned the welfare of his diocese, he showed both common sense, thoroughness, and perseverance.

We have now approached the time when the Cardinal's abilities, as well as his patience, were put to a wearisome test in endeavouring to regulate family affairs between his brother and sister-in-law.

During the short time we have given to anecdotes and reminiscences of the Cardinal's life at Frascati, matters in Florence had gone from bad to worse between the Count and Countess, and the crisis that had been long menacing was at hand. In 1779 Mann had written to Walpole, "The Pretender is in a deplorable state of health ; he has a declared fistula and is insupportable in all ways. His wife's beauty has greatly faded of late ; she has paid dear for the dregs of royalty. How will his brother be styled when he succeeds to his kingdom ? He is already called at Rome *Sua Eminenza Reale*, but that will not do then."¹

If the Countess had temporarily lost her good

¹ Mann's Letters, vol. ii. p. 351.

looks it could hardly be wondered at, considering the life of vexations and unkindness inflicted on her by Prince Charles ; but we must allow for Mann's habitual exaggerations whenever he spoke of any facts that were derogatory to the Stuarts, as a very different account was given of the Countess only a short time previous to this date by Dr. Moore, who visited Florence with the Duke of Hamilton, as his travelling physician. Dr. Moore described that the Duke and himself met "two men and two ladies walking in the public gardens, followed by four servants in livery. One of the men wore the Order of the Garter ; we were told that this was Count d'Albanie and his lady, the Countess ; she is a beautiful woman, much beloved by those who know her, who universally describe her as lively, intelligent, and agreeable."¹

At all events Alfieri was oblivious as to any change in his *donna amata*, and was daily more fascinated by her "fair skin, blonde hair, and her dark eyes." His attachment for her was now to be put to a practical test, as a climax to the prolonged tension between herself and her husband took place St. Andrew's Day, 30th November, 1780.

On the night of that feast day, when the Prince had been carousing later than usual, the servants were aroused by hearing cries of distress proceeding from the Countess's room. On running to her assistance they found the Prince trying to strangle and suffocate

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

her, and it was not without difficulty that they rescued his terrified wife, who, when she had in some degree recovered from her fright and was able to come to a decision, arrived at the conclusion that life with the Prince was no longer possible.

It was not without great deliberation that she made up her mind to a step that she was fully aware would most probably be misconstrued, and which severed her from interesting connections. Had she felt she could in any degree influence Charles Edward's actions and lead to a better order of things, she would certainly not have adopted a line that was of such evident disadvantage to herself; but she realised she could no longer stand the severe strain that she had supported with so much dignity and forbearance for such a lengthened period.

The Countess consulted with Alfieri as to the necessary preliminaries for obtaining a legal separation, and he thought it advisable to lay the matter before the Grand Duke for consideration, who, when he heard the Countess's appeal for protection, gave his approval to her request that she should be exempted from cohabitation with her husband, owing to his cruel and dangerous habits.

Having gained this point, the next step to be taken was that of evasion from the palace. This was a more difficult matter, as Charles Edward was as vigilant as ever of the custody of his wife. Alfieri therefore had to have resort to a stratagem which he confided to Madame Orlandini and Mr. Gehegen, both Irish

friends of Countess d'Albanie's, and with their assistance the evasion was carried out in the following way.

Madame Orlandini was breakfasting with the Count and Countess the day fixed on for her flight ; the latter on rising from table suggested driving to the Convent of the Bianchette to see certain work done by the nuns. The Count at once fell in with the proposal, and the whole party went out together. On arriving at the convent they found waiting at the door as if by chance, Mr. Gehegen, who remained talking with Prince Charles whilst his wife quickly ran upstairs, followed by Madame Orlandini ; they knocked at the door, which was opened at once, and shut equally quick after admitting the ladies. Meanwhile the Prince having said all he had to say to Mr. Gehegen, became impatient at being kept waiting, and went upstairs as fast as his infirmities allowed him, and knocked at the door to know the reason of the delay. After knocking many times without any reply, and getting more and more annoyed with every passing moment, the Abbess at last pushed aside the small panel which covered a grating in the door, and informed him that the Countess had come to the convent for shelter, and there she intended to remain, under the protection of the Grand Duke.

Charles Edward's fury can better be imagined than described : no language was strong enough to denounce, not only his wife and Alfieri, but all those who he considered had been partners in assisting his victim to fly from his persecutions. He had recourse

to the Grand Duke, and then to Pope Pius VI., who had succeeded Clement XIV. ; but whilst the former contented himself with saying, in much the same words as Louis XV., to whom we may remember Charles appealed on a similar occasion, that it was not his affair, the Pope not only ignored his complaints, but sent an order from Rome to oblige Charles to send his wife her linen, dresses, and whatever she required for her use to the convent. .

The Countess lost no time in writing to Rome and laying her position before her brother-in-law. He responded to her appeal for advice in a long and sincerely affectionate letter, from which the following is an extract :—

“ FRASCATI, 15 December, 1780.

“ MY DEAREST SISTER,—I cannot tell you with what regret I received your letter of the 9th. For a long time I feared what has happened, and the approval of the Court on the steps you took has fully condoned your action. You know well, my dear sister, my feelings towards you, and how much I have sympathised with your position. On the other hand, I beg you to remember that as regards your indissoluble tie with my brother I took no part in it beyond giving my consent as a matter of formality, not having been consulted in any way previously on any of the arrangements. Under the circumstances nothing can be wiser or better than your desire to come to Rome and live in a convent, and in order to arrange this matter with the Holy Father I did not lose a moment, but went to Rome for no other purpose but this. He was good enough to approve

of all my suggestions. You will reside in the convent where my mother the Queen lived for some time ; it is the least conventional of all those in Rome. French is spoken, and you will enjoy the society of many distinguished nuns. Your name is sufficient in itself to guarantee you from all annoyances."

The Cardinal concludes by a few words that contain wordly wisdom, *narvét *, and the faith that constitutes the solidity of the Church to which he belonged :—

"I implore you never let others know that you do not intend to return to your husband ; do not fear that unless a miracle takes place I should ever advise such a step, but as we may in all reverence believe that what has happened was intended by Providence to show the world that your actions were inspired by a wish to lead a higher life, so we may also hope that He wished by the same means to convert my brother."

This letter was followed by one from the Pope, whose sympathy for the Countess had been so aroused by the Cardinal's tale of her cruel fate, that he honoured her by a gracious invitation, and told her that faculty was given her to come to Rome, to the convent of the Ursuline sisters, where she would be well looked after, and allowed to go out driving if she wished to take the air. He informed her that the Nunzio had been instructed to take all necessary precautions for her journey, and as to her future it would be discussed with the Cardinal, who had put himself at her disposal. The Pope concluded, saying, "Be assured all will be arranged for your comfort,

and with heartfelt wishes we give you the fatherly Apostolic benediction.

“Given in Rome. Near St. Peter’s. 16 December, 1780.”¹

As regarded the Countess’s wish to live in a convent, which appeared to have been taken for granted by both the Pope and the Cardinal, Mann wrote the following cynical remarks :—

“The mould for any more Royal Stuarts has been broke; or what is equivalent to it, is now shut up in a convent of nuns under the double lock and key of the Pope and the Cardinal of York out of the reach of any dabbler who might foister in a spurious copy. She is to inhabit the same apartment in which Princess Sobieski frequently took refuge from the tyranny of her husband ; but devotion had a great share in that retirement, the present lady has more merit. During her nine years’ martyrdom, she has applied to cultivating her mind by studying mathematics and reading history and poetry at a time when one may well suppose that she had a great struggle with a constitution to resist the temptation of her Master, the renowned Count Alfieri, without the least blemish to her character. I think she deserves a handsome pension from England on that account. At present she is to have half the pension of 12,000 crowns which the Pope gave her husband.”²

Though bluntly stated, the above criticisms were doubtless a panegyric on the Countess, and show us the general impression at Florence of those competent

¹ *La Contessa d’Albanie*, Reumont, p. 214.

² Mann’s Letters, vol. ii. p. 376.

to judge as to the nature of her intimacy with Alfieri. The opinion of a personage in the position held by Mann can be accepted with greater confidence than the ill-natured gossip of the frivolous Florentine society, always ready to interfere and to exaggerate matters in which they had no concern.

The departure from Florence was undertaken with every precaution to keep it secret from Charles Edward, and the Countess arrived without any mis-adventures at the convent that had proved such a harbour of refuge to Clementina Sobieski ; but Mann judged correctly when he hazarded the opinion that it would not appeal to Countess d'Albanie as representing the same attractions as to the late Queen. She had no wish to exchange one convent for another, and after residing there a very short time she prevailed on the Cardinal to obtain the Pope's permission that she should live in her brother-in-law's rooms in the palace of the Cancellaria. This palace, built by Bramante, under the direction of Cardinal Riario, is one of the finest buildings of the renaissance in Rome, and has always served as the *chancellerie*, or office, for administration of affairs belonging to the Vatican.

Here the Countess led an agreeable life ; she was able to receive her friends, and gathered round her a very pleasant society. One of those who formed part of her little *coterie* mentioned that without doubt she was a most interesting woman ; her looks, manners, cleverness, and her fate, all contributed to produce

that impression. But though she enjoyed the respite from incessant disputes, and the feeling of freedom, there were many troublesome matters to regulate during the next few years before she was entirely emancipated from her husband. A most interesting correspondence between herself, the Cardinal, and Charles Edward throws the best light on the complications of the situations, and shows the different opinions of the three correspondents, who naturally each took the view of the case that suited him best. In this collection there are also some letters of Charles Edward's daughter, Charlotte Walkinshaw, who never lost a chance of increasing the estrangement between her father and his wife.¹

¹ This interesting collection of letters was purchased by the British Museum in 1894 from Count Sigismund Malatesta. They came into the possession of his family through Monsignor Cesarini, the Cardinal's secretary, to whom he confided all his papers. The Cesarini and Malatesta families were connected by marriage, and after the Monsignor's death the papers came into the hands of the Malatesta. The present Count found them stowed away amongst his family archives, and thinking they would be of greater interest in England than in Rome, was enabled to contribute a valuable addition on a subject always open to further research. With the exception of the first letter in the collection, from Charles Edward, the others are in French and Italian in the original, but are here translated for the greater convenience of our readers. It is said that the Cardinal on his death-bed disclosed the nature of the trust to Monsignor Cesarini, the paper was sealed, and was not to be opened during the lifetime of Countess d'Albanie. Monsignor Cesarini died not long after the Cardinal, and the paper was not opened till 1831, in which year the seal was broken by the authority of the Pope, when it was found that the sole heir of the last Stuart was the College of the Propaganda in Rome. It may therefore be concluded that those letters now at the British Museum formed a separate collection to those left to the Propaganda, which for the greater part concern ecclesiastical affairs ;

The first letter in the collection is from Charles Edward : the facsimile on next page is a specimen of his writing and spelling, both of which are an indelible rebuke to his tutor Sir Thomas Sheridan, to whom we have already referred as having purposely neglected the Prince's education under the influence of the English Government's bribery.

Countess d'Albanie in her first letter refers to some books claimed by the Cardinal, and says :—

“The King will not send you the books because you have not asked him again since he forwarded you the catalogue. He does not remember that you have already asked for them ten times. Really my dear husband is a very extraordinary man, and I cannot conceive why he will not give up these books.”

She quite realised the great advantage it was to her to have the Cardinal's support whilst her affairs with her husband remained still so unsettled, and she wrote to him 15th June, 1781 :—

“Besides the gratitude I owe you, pray believe in my attachment to you. I think the letter you wrote to the King is admirable, and if you will excuse the expression, it is full of malice ; I think on reading it he will be at his wits' ends. I have no news from Florence by the last post, and I wrote nothing further to Spada to avoid telling him an impertinence. I think it is wiser on my part to say no more ; silence is often more eloquent than words.”

and when the Cardinal's palace was pillaged by the French in 1798 these letters were most probably taken by Monsignor Cesarini to Perugia for greater security, that being the home of both the Malatesta and Cesarini families.

To My Dear Brother—
The Cardinal Duke!

Dear Brother, I cannot express my uneasiness
on having heard by Cintimini, your Envoy out
of France, in receiving now yr. & Agincourt's
Letter of 2. 3. Current, and mean yr. Agincourt
nothing of yr. previous treatys. This gives
me great perplexity that yr. disposition will
scarc no longer be safe in Comptain with
yr. greatest affection. If I may trouble
y^r Corring Brother, Charles. R. C.

C. Florence y^r. 2. 6. Aprne.
1481. /

On the 21st June the Countess informed the Cardinal that Cardinal Conti had been amiable enough to lend her his villa at Frascati for July. She intended to go there and pass the time with her brother-in-law if her health improved, and if she were well enough to move.

She apparently changed her mind and did not go to Frascati, as the correspondence between the Cardinal and herself continues through the summer and autumn without interruption. The news she receives from Florence is second-hand, and on 4th September she can only tell the Cardinal—

“I hear the King has decided to send you the books. I know but little of what is taking place in Florence save that the King gives constant dinners and drinks less, not being in a state to do so beyond a certain point.”

In June of the following year, 1782, the Countess heard with some anxiety that Charles Edward, instead of adapting himself to a situation that he had brought on himself, was becoming more vindictive as time went on, and he saw there was but small chance of his wife returning to him. In the next letter she shows some uneasiness on the matter :—

“I have heard from Florence that the King is occupied with the Archbishop, who is always ready for intrigues, in concocting new annoyances, and they have drawn up a petition together against you and myself to send to the King of Sardinia, who is to hand it to you, or they are not sure that

they will not send it straight to the Pope by means of the King of Sardinia. I cannot imagine anyone mixing himself up in such an affair. I also hear that Prince Corsini advises the King as to how he should act; people have a strange mania for meddling in the concerns of others. Anyhow, I confide myself to you; I am here under your protection, and I fear no one. All the same, it seems to me that it would not be amiss if you told the Archbishop of Florence, who everyone knows sows discord wherever he goes, that you beg him to attend to his own affairs. I think the King is more preoccupied with his money affairs than anything else, and he will not leave a stone unturned to oblige you to assist him."

Alfieri had arrived in Rome soon after the Countess was settled in the Cancelleria: up to that time he had contented himself with writing her letters of despair at being absent from her, but finally decided he could no longer keep away from the woman to whom he looked for inspiration. It was not without some trepidation that the Countess felt she must present him to the Cardinal, and she knew how important it was that her brother-in-law should be favourably impressed with her friend: she therefore announced Alfieri's visit to Frascati, and begged him to be the bearer of a book she offered for the Cardinal's acceptance, accompanied with the following words:—

"I noticed that your fine library is without a copy of Virgil. I therefore send you the most valuable edition I can find, and at the same time I take the liberty of confiding it to Count Alfieri, who has dined with me

to-day, and told me he wished to go and present his homages to you."

Not only did Alfieri ingratiate himself with the Cardinal, but he had the further distinction of being received by the Pope, who had heard of his rising fame, and graciously accepted the dedication of his tragedy *Saul*.

Alfieri, for whom notoriety was the breath of life, was absolutely in his element in Rome. He had taken rooms near the baths of Diocletian, and here in this perfect quiet, out of reach of the noise of the thoroughfares, he surrounded himself with his books and determined to make a name for himself. The graceful thoughts, expressed with such true poetic sentiment in his sonnets, we owe to Countess d'Albanie's influence on a nature that vibrated to every influence and mood ; they express all the emotions that successively possessed his soul, and the simplicity of language add to their grace and charm. The day was not long enough to produce all the subjects, and shape the interesting material, which in this congenial atmosphere seemed to increase in proportion to the work he bestowed on each new conception.

With the first light of dawn he often went to the Fountain of Trevi, where a few early-risers like himself constantly saw him lost in meditation, seated on one of the low columns near the rushing water ; here he would remain till the vendors and street-criers announced that the town was stirring : he would then rouse himself from his deep thoughts

and return to his rooms, where no one was admitted, and not till the sun was low on the horizon did he cease studying and writing. At that hour one of his beautiful horses was saddled, and he would gallop for miles across the Campagna, the view of which from his window had tempted him sorely all day.

His evenings were passed with Countess d'Albanie, who listened with attention and interest to all he had to relate and to the progress of his work : in this way these happy days stole by, with no anxiety for the morrow to mar the security of the present.

To both the Countess and Alfieri these two years were the happiest of their idyll ; the impressions were fresh, the sense of monotony had not yet stepped in to tarnish the ephemeral durability of the affections.

This tie, formed by the amalgamation of mutual tastes, had greater power to resist the feeling of satiety and weariness inseparable to all unions of the senses only. She, on her part, was contented and pleased to have the attachment of one of the most prominent men in Italy ; and he did not disguise that apart from her personal charm he appreciated being favoured by the greatest lady in Rome, who by her high rank enjoyed the privilege of remaining seated when she received princes and cardinals ; who was surrounded with luxury in a fine palace ; who by these advantages and her own intelligence had formed an interesting group round her, of whom she was the presiding goddess, and where he was sure of a welcome in his leisure hours.

These many considerations were not without weight to a man like Alfieri, whose actions were influenced by vanity ; it was therefore nothing short of a catastrophe, considering the combination organised on this footing, when a circumstance arose which entailed a separation of some duration between the Countess and himself.

CHAPTER VI

SEPARATION

An Embassy party—Alfieri's success—Scandal on his relations with the Countess—Alfieri ordered to leave Rome—Grief of the two friends—Charles Edward confides in the King of Sweden—He obtains pecuniary relief—Separation agreed on between the Prince and his wife—Generosity of the Countess—Correspondence with the Cardinal—The Countess meets Alfieri in Alsace.

AMONGST the numerous receptions held in Rome during the winter of 1782, none was more brilliant, or roused a greater feeling of expectancy, than the soirée announced to be given by the Spanish ambassador, the Duca Grimaldi. On that evening Alfieri's tragedy of *Antigone* was to be produced before those best qualified to offer criticisms on the drama ; he had bestowed great pains in the effort to imbue his company of amateurs with the sentiment of a piece that required considerable knowledge of dramatic art to do justice to the author's work ; and, to add to the interest, Alfieri had decided to take a leading part in it himself. A theatre had been put up in one of the vast halls of the Embassy under his supervision and direction, and as the hour fixed for the performance approached, all the best known

amongst the Roman nobility thronged the fine suite of rooms, and were welcomed with smiles and compliments by the Ambassador, who offered his arm to the ladies, and conducted them to their seats.

The beauty of the women and the richness of their dresses blended in variegated shades with the general effect of glitter that dominated the decorations of the rooms, and completed a scene of wonderful brilliancy.

Foremost amidst the galaxy of fair women was the stately and proud Senatrice Rezzonico, who still bore in mind the insult she considered she had received from the Cardinal of York, through the conduct of his *lacche*, on the night of Cardinal de Bernis's party. With the consciousness of power due to her position and beauty, with a supercilious smile barely curving her lips at the murmur of admiration distinctly audible, escorted by the Ambassador to the seat of honour she swept by her numerous admirers, and took her place next Cardinal Gerdil. Though the oldest, he was still the most gallant of all the cardinals, and by his repeated glances towards the Princess, he betrayed his gratification at being seated near the handsomest and most *r  pandue* woman in Rome. Dressed in a costly brocade, the train of which was trimmed with ermine, a magnificent diamond coronet encircling her masses of hair, the Princess called to mind a beautiful Venetian picture ; and her dazzling beauty, then at its height, threw others entirely into the shade, who when not eclipsed by such a luminary held their own in good looks.

Her rival, the admired Principessa di Santa Croce, was the next to attract attention in a gown entirely covered with priceless Brussels lace. She entered the room leaning languidly on the arm of the French Ambassador, Cardinal de Bernis, whose courtship of the Princess was too old a tale to excite any comment. It was well known that the Cardinal never sat down to any repast at his luxuriously furnished table without four covered dishes being placed before him, preliminary to being served himself. These special dishes were exclusively for the Princess's use. At a signal given by the major-domo, who stood by with an ivory wand, the four covers were removed, the contents of the dishes were carefully inspected by the Cardinal, and at another flourish of the major-domo's wand, they were again solemnly covered, and at once carried to the Princess in a large tin chest covered with crimson silk, and heated, so that if not hot, she could at least count on her dinner arriving moderately warm.¹

Amongst the jewels that evening none surpassed those of the Principessa Rospigliosi in value; her diamonds alone were worth a million of francs; and the two sisters, the Principesse Doria and Colonna, excited glances of envy—the one for her magnificent pearls, and the other for her necklace composed of superb emeralds.

Whilst all eyes were occupied in comparing, admiring, and chiefly envying this great display of

¹ *Corte Romana*, Silvagni, vol. ii. p. 48.

jewels, lace, and rich materials, there was a momentary lull in the buzz of conversation, and all looks were directed to Countess d'Albanie, who, though the last to arrive, was the prominent personage of the reception. Her dignified presence and air of distinction turned the attention from the proud Roman beauties and their jewels to a far more distinguished personality. With perfect composure she took the place reserved for her near the orchestra, and if she had any feeling of annoyance that the Senatrice Rezzonico was occupying the seat to which she considered she had a claim, she could console herself with knowing that she was playing the principal part in the evening's proceedings, and though her seat might be taken, no one could usurp her place in Alfieri's heart.

The Countess on taking her place barely bowed to the ladies near her, and only exchanged words with the ambassadors and the few most distinguished men who advanced to pay her their respects. As the last chord of the symphony composed by Cimarosa expressly for the occasion was struck, the curtain was slowly raised. Simultaneously the flutter of fans and the rustling of costly silks ceased, and with breathless interest the spectators followed the working out of the plot, and applauded the talent displayed by the actors in the interpretation of their parts. Though *Antigone* is by no means the best of Alfieri's tragedies, the performance exceeded all expectations, and when the last act was over the whole assembly rose and unanimously called for the author.

The acting was admirable, and Alfieri's interpretation of his part was inimitable ; but the importance of the success lay in the revelation of his powers as a tragic writer. With the concurrence of all the critics, the electrified audience felt that the representation at Palazzo Grimaldi had brought to light the creator of Italian tragedy. The harmony manifested in the conception, and the mastery of language, were undoubtedly the production of a genius, and justified those expectations in his future formed by maturer experiences. To none did this enthusiastic scene appeal with more forcible interest than to the Countess. She now occupied all the attention that had been bestowed earlier in the evening on the Roman ladies, and formed the centre of a group who eagerly pressed round her to contribute their share of the praise showered on the author, who on his side was listening, not without some emotion, to the overwhelming congratulations on his present, and prognostications of his future success.

As the crowd slowly dispersed in the large suite of rooms, a hundred servants entered, each carrying a silver tray on which were sherbets and ices made by a confectioner who had come from Naples for the occasion. The Ambassador, who liked originalities, had the ices served in fancy dishes also made in ice and sugar, and to those who expressed their admiration at this novelty he related with a smile of satisfaction that he had taken the idea from a biography of Cardinal Colonna, in which it was mentioned that his

ices had been served in this way at a party he gave two centuries previously.

But if fame gives satisfaction, it has also its counteracting drawbacks ; and that memorable evening, so important for Alfieri's future reputation, attracted not only great attention to himself, but also to Countess d'Albanie. His name was in everyone's mouth. Those who knew him personally lost no opportunity of extolling him to others who had not that privilege, and who felt it was indispensable they should become acquainted with a man who was assuming such a position of note, both in the world of literature and also in society. It was not surprising that these reports on Alfieri's genius and popularity should gradually spread to Florence, and consequently Countess d'Albanie's name was also very much before the public.

The intimate footing on which Alfieri had been with Charles Edward ought to have protected her from unjust calumnies and accusations ; but, *les absents ont tort*, and no sooner had she left her husband's house than the fickle breath of popularity, that as long as she was there showed itself by sympathy in her sad position, slowly shifted, and one by one her acquaintances began to question whether she had done right or wrong in leaving Charles Edward. From criticism they proceeded to accuse her of having abandoned him for ulterior motives ; and being fairly launched on a current of ill-natured gossip, it took but a short time before those on whom the Countess counted as her friends became her enemies.

The Prince had never forgiven the flight of his wife ; he had no one now on whom to vent his ill-temper and fits of passion, and all his worst feelings were roused into indignation that she should have dared to place him in a position which, he could not fail to recognise, made him a subject for derision, not only in Florence, but in other places.

He was therefore predisposed to listen to any reports that put her in the wrong ; and instead of silencing her accusers with becoming dignity, he readily lent an ear to those who, to gain his favour, found no difficulty in fabricating stories against her. His attention was further drawn to the strange fact that both the Pope and the Cardinal, who had taken his wife under their protection, should apparently ignore the scandal to which they were giving their support ; and the Prince was seriously advised to remonstrate with his brother on the subject.

Whilst Charles Edward was still meditating whether he should act on this suggestion, the opportunity of doing so was placed in his hands.

On 24th March, 1783, a courier arrived in all haste from Florence to inform the Cardinal that his brother was in a most precarious state ; a sudden change for the worse had set in, and the opinion of the doctors was, that the end was merely a question of days. Everything tended to confirm that opinion : the swelling of the legs had increased, mortification had commenced, and his breathing was most painful. The Prince had already made known his last wishes, and had received the sacrament.

The Cardinal, greatly distressed at this news, lost no time in starting for Florence, where he arrived on the 31st; but during those few days a change for the better had set in, and the Cardinal found to his great surprise that Charles had got the better of the acute crisis in a most marvellous way, and was already quite convalescent. This was the first time the brothers had met since the flight of the Countess, and Charles without delay laid the whole matter before the Cardinal, and gave his own version on the reason of his wife's desertion.

He denied the charges brought against him of ill-treatment, and said they were invented by Alfieri, who for his own ends had effected a rupture between his wife and himself. Charles proceeded seriously to upbraid his brother for having encouraged her in open rebellion against her husband, and did not rest content till he had obtained the Cardinal's promise that Alfieri should leave Rome immediately.

The Cardinal, like all weak natures who are always influenced by the last to speak, was so impressed by his brother's solemn statement that, as soon as he returned to Rome, he reported his brother's version of the circumstances to the Pope, who ordered Alfieri to leave Rome and the Papal States within fifteen days.

Not content with the successful result of his appeal to the Pope, the Cardinal, as if he wanted general approval to reassure himself that he had acted rightly, divulged to the whole of Rome the intrigues of

Alfieri with the Countess, according to his brother's views ; but this unnecessary exposure of private affairs was considered a most reprehensible action on the Cardinal's part ; it excited great indignation, and instead of coercing public opinion, great sympathy was shown to the Countess in her painful position.

Alfieri's conduct at this unfortunate dénouement was worthy of all praise. He made a statement in which he expressed himself with great dignity, and said it was not for him to apologise for having assumed a position with the Countess that was accepted amongst all the married women in Italy, and that, while he admitted that husband, brother-in-law, and priests had a perfect right to object to such a custom, even though in his case it had not gone beyond the bounds of friendship, he must also affirm that the cruel treatment of the husband, his brutalities and bad habits, of which he had been witness, entirely condoned her turning to him for support and friendship. In conclusion he inquired how was he to suppose that the court he paid to the Countess was disapproved of by either of the brothers ? And he drew attention to the fact that Count d'Albanie had always received him in his house as his most intimate guest, and the Cardinal had invariably begged him to accompany the Countess whenever she dined with His Eminence at Frascati. Notwithstanding their inconsistent behaviour, he was ready to leave Rome, and thereby hoped to relieve two such worthy people from further anxiety, and he was still more desirous of doing what

was best for the peace and good name of such a noble lady.¹

Besides her despair at this unexpected break in her life with Alfieri, combining all that represented peace and happiness to her, the Countess could not help resenting the want of consideration on the Cardinal's part, who had neglected to acquaint her on the necessity of Alfieri's departure, till after he had taken the required steps with the Pope. She had no wish to put hindrances in the way of what to her was a most bitter grief; but in a letter she wrote to the Cardinal after Alfieri had left, she showed that though his wishes had been carried out, she objected to the means adopted by her brother-in-law.

"According to your desire, my brother, I persuaded Count Alfieri to leave Rome this morning. I should have urged him to hasten his departure had it not been that after careful reflection, and with the approval of those who gave me most sensible advice, I felt that an abrupt departure would have opened the door to injurious criticisms on my conduct, which though devoid of foundation, have already been too generally spread. Anyhow, your wish is fulfilled, and your advice has been followed. As regards myself, the greatest trial to me is that publicity should have been given to a matter that damages my reputation, and wounds my feelings of delicacy. I bid you consider what pain you would have spared me if, as we agreed formerly, you had confided to myself only your intentions; if you had not had recourse to the Pope, for which there was not the slightest necessity, and in

¹ *Vita di Vittorio Alfieri*, p. 216.

short, if you had not been carried away by an impulse which I am sure your kind heart must tell you was not right towards me, either as your sister-in-law as for what I am myself. All the same, I will not think of what is past and beg you to believe in my sincere attachment.”¹

On no occasions did the Cardinal’s lamentable want of character come out stronger than during these family disputes. He became absolutely bewildered in his efforts to keep on good terms with all parties; and if he ever went as far as to express an opinion, his fear of having committed himself led him to fall from one blunder into another. With regard to this particular occurrence he felt that the Countess was right, and that he had acted too hastily in a question that had received his entire support; and wishing to make some amends to her for his injudicious conduct he offered for her use some of the diamonds left him by his father. She replied to this proposal with great tact and delicacy :—

“ If you have the slightest scruples in regard to the diamonds I entreat you not to think of it: I see you wish to please me, and that is quite sufficient. I only ask for your friendship and nothing else in the world. Being your brother’s wife, I naturally have a right to the diamonds, and it is circumstances only that prevent my having them, and not your fault. Everyone will know that you wished to give them me, as I shall be the first to mention it; I consider it a proof of your friendship and confidence, for which I offer you all my gratitude.”

¹ Malatesta Papers, British Museum, additional, 34,634.

In her next letter she announced to the Cardinal that her mother and sister were coming to pay her a visit; and he, wishing to do her a pleasure, made arrangements that they should be lodged in the apartment of Marchese Angelelli that belonged to the Cardinal. The offer was a mark of hospitality, but evidently the accommodation was very limited, as the Countess answered :—

“ I fear that so many people at the same time will be a great inconvenience to you, and I must confess I do not see how six people are to be lodged in a small apartment where there is only one bed, and no conveniences of any kind. But if all the same you prefer that they should come to you and not go elsewhere, far from wishing to oppose your proposal, I hasten to reply that my mother as well as I will accept this token of your friendship with gratitude.”

The visit of Princess Stolberg and one of her daughters was but a slight distraction in the Countess's life that had become as monotonous and devoid of interest to her as to Alfieri ever since the 4th of May, the day that he left Rome. He on his side found existence insupportable. He first tried by constant moving from place to place to cheat himself into forgetting the bitterness of separation. He went to Siena to see Gori, one of his most intimate friends, and from there to Ravenna and Milan ; but these changes of scene in the same country were not sufficient, and he decided to go to England, where he could gratify his love of horses, and would find

greater distractions than Italy could give him at that moment.

The Countess herself had urged his going to England ; they both felt that the greater distance that parted them, the more bearable would be the separation. In several letters on this subject which she wrote to Gori, the mutual friend, she expressed her wish that Alfieri should travel, as by so doing he would be less depressed, and his happiness was her sole preoccupation. She said it was for him only that she lived, and was trying to occupy herself in the way that would best please him ; amongst other occupations she was perfecting herself on the harp, as she knew how anxious he was that she should improve her talent for music.

Another letter to Gori is written in a deeper tone of despair, and shows her varying moods of alternate hope and fear.

“ Sometimes I think, and fear, that our friend will cease to remember me, and yet, if it would give him happiness I feel I ought to wish it. I ought also to hope that he will find someone who will give him less anxiety than I do, with whom he can live quietly and contentedly, but I have not the courage.”

The next letter is less self-sacrificing and more imperious in its expressions.

“ I want him, I cannot do without him ; and if there is not a change in this state of things before long I must take a decided step, and then I should be the happiest woman in the world ; the past would be for-

gotten, I should live exclusively in, and for, him. I do not care for a life of luxury : all worldly satisfactions are nothing to me, repose with him is all I ask."

Alfieri for a long time was too distracted at the abrupt termination of his daydream to put pen to paper. The only want of which he was sensible was that of perpetual movement and excitement : his inspirations, habits of study, and visions of fame were temporarily scattered to the winds. When he attempted to convey his sentiments in sonnets, as was his custom, he experienced a sense of inability to put into language the nebulous agitation of his brain which seemed to rotate without cessation in the same orbit, without throwing new light on the impressions he was vainly endeavouring to mould into shape. It was not till this first stage of nervous excitement had to some degree exhausted itself through its intensity, that his brain regained its equilibrium : then the suspended imagination reasserted its vitality and enabled him to give us some of his most beautiful sonnets, in which the episodes of his sorrow were the sole refrain.

The first sonnet addressed to the Countess referring to the present circumstances is a peaceful flow of harmony, and recalls her "fair face in which are united beauty and modesty, and by its engaging smile and expression of simplicity invites both affection and respect" : he condemns the hypocrisy, vile schemes, and envy, that had parted them, but bids her wait for the day when he "will again be near her whom he loves."¹

¹ Appendix A.

The next sonnet shows less calm and patience under the cruel decree that has parted them : he is agitated at the strain of despair in her letters and at her incapacity to resign herself to what is inevitable. In the concluding lines he says, "I hear your cry of reproach that I leave you to a slow death," and to give her courage he reminds her that, "two lives hang on one fragile thread," by which he intended to convey that owing to her husband's critical health the day could not be far distant when she would be free.¹

Contemporaneously with these verses the Countess wrote to Gori, "How it sullies one's soul to feel that ones' happiness depends on the death of another, and yet how is it possible to do otherwise than have this before one's mind ?"²

But precisely at the time that the Countess and Alfieri unavoidably dwelt on anticipations for the future, there was a marked improvement in Charles Edward's health ; he seemed to have taken a new lease of life, and was so much better, that during the summer of 1783 he was able to visit various country towns in Tuscany, and assisted at the *palio* held every year at Siena in the month of August. The annual fête of the *palio* has been held in the Piazza del Campo in Siena ever since the days of the old Republic. This picturesque piazza occupies the centre of the town, where the three hills stand on which Siena is built, mentioned by Dante in his *Purgatory*.

¹ Appendix B.

² *Vittorio Alfieri*, E. Bertana, p. 203. Roma, 1902.

The piazza is semicircular, and concave in the centre, which gives it the appearance of an ancient theatre. The popular fête takes place every summer, and still preserves the characteristics of a pageant of the Middle Ages. The proceedings open by a long procession, headed by the *podestà*, or governor of the town ; he is followed by representatives of each *contrada*, or parish, of Siena, some on foot, others on gaily caparisoned horses, and all in mediæval costume.

Each *contrada* carries a banner with its distinguishing device ; precedence is always given to the procession of the *contrada dell' oca* (goose) in homage to Saint Catherine of Siena, who was born in that parish. A youth on foot heads each separate procession. He is chosen for his good looks, and in his picturesque costume and fair flowing wig, with a small *berretta*, or cap, jauntily stuck at the back of his head, he might have stepped out of the frame of an old picture of the school of Pinturicchio. When the processions have marched round the piazza, they take up their place in the space reserved for them on the wooden steps constructed for the occasion below the Palazzo del Comune ; their old costumes and flying banners form a most striking effect. Amidst tremendous excitement the horse-race commences. Owing to the rapid slope of the course, in order to avoid any disaster, the walls of the houses in the hollow are bolstered with thick padding. Each jockey wears the colours of his *contrada*. The peculiarity attending the race is, that instead of beating the horses the

jockeys belabour one another with heavy thonged whips. The winner of the race is presented amidst great solemnity with a silver salver and the *palio*, or banner. As soon as the victor can effect a safe exit by the help of the police—as the jealousy is so great that he has to be protected—he proceeds to the church of his own parish. No sooner does he enter it than, as if by magic, the edifice is a blaze of light, and a *Te Deum* is sung as a rejoicing at his success. Perhaps the quaintest of all the customs in connection with this unique fête is the dinner offered to the jockey in the principal street of his parish, served in the open air, with the horse that won him the race by his side, who shares with him in his triumph and is fed appropriately at the same time as his master.

At the beginning of November Charles went to Pisa, and during his sojourn there he had occasion to make the acquaintance of Gustavus III., King of Sweden, who was travelling in Italy under the name of "Count Haga" to enable him to study antiquities and the fine arts without being disturbed with official etiquette.

It is said that when the King saw the sad condition of the Prince—living alone and on restricted means—he could not restrain his tears as he thought of his former position compared with his actual painful circumstances.

Touched by the King's sympathy, Charles was moved to unburden his woes to Gustavus, who made

no difficulties in accepting the rôle of the Prince's confidant, and agreed to help him in every way most agreeable to him.

The King also gave very wise advice, and impressed on the Prince that the wisest thing he could do would be to give up dwelling on past dreams and ambitions, to live quietly in the present, and try to put all agitating thoughts on one side. He also wrote at once to Louis XVI., after having obtained Charles Edward's promise that he would accept whatever France offered him, to acquaint him of Charles Edward's piteous condition ; and this letter he confided to the Swedish Ambassador in Paris, Baron de Staël, the husband of the celebrated Madame de Staël, bidding him present the letter to Louis XVI. in person. In the same strain Gustavus also wrote to Charles III. of Spain, who immediately assigned a pension to the Prince of 1,000 piastres.

After having done what might help to improve the material conditions of Charles, the King next turned his attention towards assisting him in his domestic predicaments ; and having obtained the Prince's permission, he availed himself of the occasion of his visit to Rome to enter into communication with the Cardinal and the Countess as to the advisability of a formal separation with her husband. In consequence of these negotiations with the Cardinal, a proposal was sent to the Prince referring to an eventual separation, to which proposal Charles replied in the following words :—

“FLORENCE, 27th March, 1784.

“MONSIEUR LE COMTE,—I cannot sufficiently express my thanks for your communication of the 24th March. I leave myself entirely in your hands, for it would be impossible for me to find anyone to whom I could better confide my honour and my interests. I beg you to end this affair as soon as possible. I quite concur in a total separation from my wife, and hope she will no longer bear my name. With renewed sentiments of sincere gratitude and friendship,

“I remain your true friend,

“C. D'ALBANIE.”¹

The Countess was equally desirous of coming to a definite understanding with her husband, and readily agreed to a formal deed of separation, which was drawn up by Charles Edward 3rd April, 1784, and ratified by the Pope.

Though no conditions had been made in the agreement of separation as to provision for Charles Edward's maintenance, the Countess now came forward and, forgetful of the pain and sorrow he had caused her, she displayed the greatest generosity in her proposals of assistance to the Prince. The next few letters will be read with interest as showing the fine qualities of a nature that remained equally unspoilt by admiration and unsoured by adversity. As soon as affairs had been settled owing to the King of Sweden's negotiations with both parties, she acquainted the Cardinal with her intentions in regard to her money.

¹ *La Contessa d'Albanie*, Reumont, p. 231.

"I have not been able to tell you sooner, my dear brother, of the proposal that the King of Sweden made me since I saw you at Frascati, concerning an arrangement with my husband. I am very glad of this opportunity to prove that I had no intention of taking possession of your brother's fortune, as he says ; and without any regret, I hand over to him not only the 1,000 crowns that you give me, but also the 3,000 which by our marriage contract were given me for my pin money. I also agree that he should take possession of his diamonds. These are sacrifices I would willingly have made long ago had I not thought that my honour necessitated keeping these allowances as a conclusive proof that when I left my husband I had the sincere approbation of all those whom I esteem. I therefore deferred giving up what is mine till the day that our affairs were settled, and by doing so everyone will see that we have separated by mutual consent. The King of Sweden accepted the charge of bringing matters to a conclusion. I left myself entirely in his hands, and he has acted as a friend as well as a relation.

"To my great surprise, Stuart this morning brought the paper already signed, and then took it to the King of Sweden ; as soon as I receive it, I will let you know, and I am sure, my dear brother, that you will rejoice with me that I shall be definitely free from my husband's complaints, and he from privations, of which Stuart gives me a sad account. I am proud to assist him and to give up what to myself is a superfluity, if it helps to procure him the necessities of life. May Heaven grant him repose and contentment in his old age."

The Cardinal did not take the same view as the Countess regarding her wish to hand over the money

to Charles : he actually made a feeble protest on the subject, and in his reply reminds her that she is offering what is not hers, as the 1,000 crowns was a gift that he had generously made her.

“ 9th April, 1784.

“ MY VERY DEAR SISTER,—I am so busy just now that I hardly have time to answer your letter, and therefore I limit myself to saying that no one in the world more than I desire an understanding between you and your husband, but a separation that only has interested aims would never have my approval. I cannot, nor do I wish to mix up in your affairs, but I bid you to remember that all that Cantini has paid you since you have been in the Cancelleria under my care belongs to me, that equally as long as you remain in my house Cantini will still attend to your requirements, and that being the case, I consider it a great affront that my brother should impose on me conditions on what is mine and not his. This obliges me on my part to acquaint him with my opinion in the matter.

“ I therefore beg you, my very dear sister, no longer to insist on a point that really affects my health when I consider that it concerns my brother, who is trying by calumnies and untruths to force me to give him all he wants without offering me the smallest thanks. Wishing you a happy Easter, I remain, my very dear sister, your affectionate brother,

“ HENRY, Cardinal.”

The Countess was sincerely grieved on receiving this answer to see the turn affairs had taken regarding the financial side of the separation, and she could not rest content till she had made another effort to

convince the Cardinal of the justice of her scruples. She had no doubts as to the accuracy of Stuart's statements, who had for a long time been Charles Edward's man of business, and had come to Rome in order to wind up affairs between the Count and Countess. Having Stuart's authority to corroborate her conviction that Charles was in need of aid, she addressed the following appeal to the Cardinal, hoping to be able to prove to him that his brother was not actuated by interested motives :—

"I hasten to send you an authentic copy of my husband's consent to our separation, a separation to which we have mutually agreed, after being convinced that owing to our different characters it was impossible for us to live together: the example of others as distinguished as my husband and myself makes us feel we are justified in taking this step. You see therefore that your unhappy brother submits to the dictates of reason, and that he is not actuated by motives of interest as you imagine. As regards returning him my pin-money, which he agreed to pay me, and that you say I owe to you since I have been in Rome, I consider I am disposing of what is mine, not yours, and I repeat, it is a sacrifice I would have made as soon as I left him had I not thought it unadvisable owing to circumstances. Do believe me, my brother, the King is in great want, and I should dis honour myself did I not help him. Stuart will tell you that during his last illness he had not the means to pay the Masses said for him, and that at the time that Stuart wrote he had not five sequins in the house.¹

¹ A sequin, the Italian *zeccino*, was worth about eleven or twelve francs.

Believe me, my brother, he cannot live on the 50,000 francs he has from France, and not having any pension it is impossible for him to exist. At one time I thought he was putting by, but I have verified the state of his affairs at the banker's, and I see there was no exaggeration on his part, so I think myself bound to assist him. If you remember, my dear brother, I was of the same way of thinking when you proposed to keep the diamonds on which I have claims, with the exception of some of the large stones to which you have equal rights with your brother ; but I felt myself incapable of accepting an offer for which I should have been universally condemned, and which I cannot conscientiously refuse him. Even for yourself, my dear brother, you with your good heart and such upright judgment cannot do otherwise but agree that it is far better we should separate on friendly terms, and it ought to please you that I make a present to your brother, as it shows that I have forgiven him his unkindness, and that I wish to make him happy. As you make me a present of this money, what can it signify to you that I give it to him ? If I told you of my intentions it was an unnecessary attention on my part, as you would probably never have known of it. Is it not better that he should be happy the few years he has to live, and that both you and I should have no anxiety on that score ? Therefore why torment him by writing to accuse him of disposing of what is yours, whereas it is I who with the best will offer him what is mine ?"

Having thus put before the Cardinal this lengthened exposition as to her reasons for coming to Charles Edward's assistance, the correspondence between the Countess and her brother-in-law relating to the

financial difficulties consequent on the separation is closed. But while her warm-hearted generosity was worthy of all praise, she had unfortunately to admit that the Cardinal had shown some wisdom in begging her to keep in her own hands the small pension of which she could dispose. For some time past he saw that his brother was entirely in Stuart's power, and suspected that it was not only for his master's interests that Stuart laid such stress on the Prince's poverty. Deprived of any help from her husband's family, and having given up all to which she had a claim, she found herself shortly after this act of self-denial under the disagreeable necessity of having to seek Marie Antoinette's assistance, and it was due to the Queen's gracious interest in the Countess that she obtained an allowance of 60,000 francs from the Court of France.

The separation between Charles Edward and his wife being thus more or less satisfactorily an accomplished fact, the Countess felt a great weight off her mind, and with a light heart she arranged plans for the summer that might combine a meeting with Alfieri. The Cardinal had obtained the Pope's permission that she might go to Baden, and from thence to Colmar, in Alsace, where she took a villa in the hopes of restoring her health, that had been considerably shaken with all the worries and anxieties of the past months.

Here in this peaceful spot the meeting took place, and the poet once more found himself working by the side of his muse. The clouds of the troubled past

rolled away under the magic spell of the present, and during the two months of complete happiness, Alfieri, fired with renewed inspiration, wrote the three tragedies *Agide*, *Sophonisba*, and *Mirra*, the last-mentioned being one of his most renowned works.

At the end of the summer a fresh separation was necessary; the Countess was obliged for the present to remain in the States belonging to the Holy Church, and decided to pass the winter at Bologna. Alfieri went to Pisa, and though "only the Apennines divided them, he knew it was impossible to attempt to see her, owing to the petty gossip of the small Italian towns."¹

The poet's highly strung nerves and artistic temperament could ill brook the breaks that he foresaw would be constantly repeated in his intercourse with the Countess. They interrupted his train of thought, and interfered with the sequence of the subject on which he was intent. During the five months he passed at Pisa he became nervous and discontented, and while brooding over the destiny that only tantalised him by pointing out where his happiness and fame lay, he expressed himself strongly to Bianchi, one of his friends, to whom he wrote on an accident he had had out riding, "Though I should have disliked to have remained disfigured or maimed, I assure you as soon as I was up again I felt if only the horse had put his foot on my temple, it would have saved me from a thousand worries."

¹ *Vita di Vittorio Alfieri*, p. 241.

Fortunately those who suffer from moods have the compensating facility of being quickly transported from a state of unjustifiable despair to that of equally exaggerated happiness ; therefore, when the winter had gone by and the lengthening spring days announced the approach of another summer, Alfieri's gloomy forebodings had long since been forgotten, and he only counted the moments when he would again see his *donna amata*. The Cardinal, meanwhile, after the Countess left Rome for Germany, congratulated himself on the prospect of a return to his peaceful pursuits, undisturbed by quarrels in which he had no real sympathy. The prolonged period of family feuds was particularly offensive to the Cardinal, whose placid temperament was ill adapted to accept stoically the agitation attendant on the part he had accepted of intermediary ; it therefore seriously discomposed him, when, instead of being freed from worries on the conclusion of affairs relating to his sister-in-law, he found that he was again to be drawn into a new series of disputes.

CHAPTER VII

CHARLES EDWARD'S DAUGHTER. HIS DEATH

Arrival of Lady Charlotte Stuart—Charles tries to obtain his brother's recognition of her claims—Receptions at Palazzo Guadagni—Intrigues of Charlotte Stuart—Her conquest of the Cardinal—Journey to Rome—Her position as royal Princess—Charles Edward failing fast—The summer at Albano—Return to Rome—His death—His daughter left sole heir—She settles in the Cancelleria—Her death at Bologna—The Cardinal assumes the title of King—Alfieri and the Countess in Paris—Her salon—The taking of the Bastille—Visit to England.

LADY CHARLOTTE STUART'S arrival in Florence on the 5th October, 1784, made no little talk among the Florentines. Some years past when Charles Edward arrived there, vague rumours had been circulated regarding an illegitimate daughter of his; but as she was never referred to, and so many other events of greater importance had taken place in Palazzo Guadagni since that time, great surprise was expressed when it was known she had come to Florence, accompanied by Lord Laird and a lady-in-waiting, to take up in her father's house the reins of government dropped by the Countess.

All communication had ended between Clementina Walkinshaw and Charles since the day she had been compelled, much against her will, to sign the paper

declaring that no marriage had taken place between them : she and her daughter had then placed themselves under the protection of the French Government and lived principally in the convent at Meaux, on the pension granted them by the Cardinal of York.

Apparently the Prince had ceased to take the slightest interest in either mother or daughter ; but now that he found himself alone and in want of a companion, it came to his mind that no one would be more adapted to assume that position than his daughter, who was then thirty-one years of age. In order to avoid any objections that might be raised as to her being fit or suitable to accept the responsibilities of mistress of his house, he obtained the authorisation of France to an Act by which her legitimacy was legally declared.

This Act was registered with the consent of Louis XVI. and the French Parliament on the 6th September ; and no sooner was Charles reassured on this point, than he wrote to his daughter to inform her of the steps he had taken to facilitate her position, and invited her to come to Florence and make her home with him.

Such a stroke of fortune had never been thought of by Clementina Walkinshaw. The impression of the last violent scene with Charles, when she fled from him for her life, was still vividly before her mind ; nor had she forgotten his curt message when arrangements were made for her pension ; therefore any regard or even civility from him was the last thing

that she had ever imagined as being likely to occur. As may be supposed, there was no hesitation on the part of either mother or daughter as to accepting the Prince's offer, and without loss of time the Duchess of Albanie, that being the title agreed on in the Act, left Paris, and reached Florence in October. By this title the Duchess enjoyed the privilege of the *droit du tabouret*, or of sitting on a stool in the presence of the Queen of France ; she also could claim audiences of the Queen at Versailles.

Charles Edward spared neither trouble nor expense to give his daughter a fitting welcome. With this object in view he had newly decorated his house, and sent to Rome for part of his furniture as well as for his share of the jewels and silver belonging to his mother.

Whilst Charles was exerting himself with an energy that seemed a reminiscence of his early life, he thought it advisable to acquaint his brother as to the arrival of his daughter ; for he felt it was essential that his only relation should recognise the position he had given her, and agree to her title of Duchess, by which she could claim so many privileges. The following letter on the subject was received by the Cardinal early in November :—

“ FLORENCE, November, 1784.

“ MY DEAR BROTHER,—I received your reply through Cantini. I wish to inform you that my dearest daughter, having been recognised by myself, by France, and by the Pope, is from now Royal Highness,

and as such must be recognised by you, and wherever she goes. I do not wish to dispute any of your own rights ; as you are my brother they cannot be discussed, but I must beg you not to dispute those of my dear child : the fact of her being my child ought to make her sacred to you.

“I remain your very affectionate brother,
“CHARLES R.”¹

Before the Cardinal had time to recover from his perplexity at this announcement, or to arrive at any decision as to the course he should pursue, the first letter was quickly followed by two others, in which the old grievance of money allowances is the principal topic. Though Charles Edward's wife had voluntarily renounced all claim to the 40,000 francs as stipulated in the marriage contract for her use, the Prince was incapable of placing his faith in such generosity, and when it came to his ears that France had granted her a pension of 60,000 francs, he wanted to assure himself that the marriage settlement of 40,000 francs was absolutely cancelled. In order to be sure of this fact he proceeded to lay the question before his brother as follows :—

“I have renewed the request I already made to M. de Vergennes, and have again drawn his attention to the necessity of including Madame's dowry of 40,000 francs in the pension she receives from France ; it was agreed in the marriage contract that the dowry should be taken out of the Court subsidies. I therefore ought to be free of all engage-

¹ Malatesta Papers. Additional, 34,634.

ment towards her, as during her lifetime she will have the enjoyment of 60,000 francs. It would be most unjust, surely you agree with me, my dearest brother, that after such bad conduct on her part she should be able to dispose of 100,000 francs."

The contents of the next letter acquaint the Cardinal of a scheme to obtain payment of a debt due from England. It had suddenly come to Charles Edward's mind that the dowry of Queen Mary Beatrice, widow of James II., not having been claimed, had been accruing for the past twenty-five years at the rate of a million of francs a year, and that therefore, even accepting some sacrifice, a considerable sum was due ; owing to the sad state of finances in which he found himself, even a reduced capital would be of great assistance towards improving his condition. Charles proceeded to tell his brother that Lord Caryll was only waiting for the Cardinal's signature to take the matter in hand.

There could be no doubt of Lord Caryll's devotion and attachment to the Stuarts, and no pains were too great when he had an opportunity of serving them ; but this chimera of Charles Edward in claiming a debt of the past twenty-five years from the English Government was an impossible suggestion and could not be practically considered, and no further mention was made concerning these unrealisable assets.

These letters from Charles were most displeasing to the Cardinal, who was already badly disposed

towards his brother on account of the mean spirit he had displayed through all the arrangements connected with his separation from his wife ; and he was annoyed at the persistency of the Prince in creating difficulties of his own making by which others as well as himself were thrown into awkward situations. This time the Cardinal determined to keep aloof from a question in which he had no concern ; and as Charles had chosen to send for his daughter, he considered that it was his brother's business to attend to any complications arising from such a decision. To show the Prince that he was indifferent to the subject of his last correspondence, the Cardinal, with an effort of will unusual to him, determined to leave the letters unanswered. Meanwhile, to all appearances, the health of the Prince seemed very critical, as in the year 1784 Sir Horace Mann had again informed Walpole, "The Count grows worse every hour, and has had the Extreme Unction" ; but if such were the case, his recuperative powers were almost miraculous, for we read that he and his daughter entertained on a large scale in Palazzo Guadagni, and frequently gave small dances.

Perhaps the presence of his daughter contributed to the change worked on Charles. It was similar to the enthusiasm he displayed in the early days of his marriage, and just as Palazzo Muti in Rome had completely changed its aspect under the brightening influence of Countess d'Albanie till the novelty of the situation wore off, and he returned to his pre-

vailing vices, so the house in Florence that had been so full of painful recollections seemed cleared of all the cobwebs of the past under the new régime, and it became one of the pleasantest centres in Florence.

Sir Horace Mann said that all the Florentine ladies drove up to the door to leave their cards on the Duchess ; for it had been decided that, contrary to the rule established by the Countess, she was to return all the ladies' visits, which alone would contribute to her popularity in a country where the rules of society are very much considered.

In appearance she had no pretensions to good looks, and was singularly destitute of charm. A visitor gave the following description of her in 1786 : "She is a tall, robust woman of very dark complexion and coarse-grained skin, with more of masculine boldness than feminine modesty or elegance."

It seemed singularly inappropriate that Charles Edward should have chosen the Feast of St. Andrew, the anniversary of the day that his wife left him in despair, to decorate his daughter with the Orders of St. Andrew and the Thistle. He asserted his royal prerogatives still further by conferring titles on some of his suite, amongst others on Stuart, originally his valet, then promoted to be his man of business, and finally made a baronet. All the patents were drawn up "from our Court in Florence in the nineteenth year of our reign," and signed "Charles R."¹

Charles Edward seemed to have lost all sentiment

¹ Reumont, p. 251.

of what was decorous and fitting to his circumstances, age, and pitiable physical conditions. It might have been supposed that he would have preferred to lead a retired life, out of reach of observation and comments which could not be otherwise than unfavourable on his proceedings ; but his feelings of delicacy were blunted in an extraordinary way, and through never having exercised any self-control he was now a complete slave to his impulses, that became almost fierce if not immediately realised : all consideration for others had quite ceased to influence any of his actions.

This was not the case with the Countess. A roseate dawn had given false hopes of a happy marriage ; but though the afterglow of unfulfilled expectations had been a grievous disappointment, she had soared above the contemptible satisfaction of any mean vindictiveness, and only when her attention was unavoidably called to some fact that grated on her sense of refinement did she show any resentment on what was obviously done with the intention of wounding her.

In a letter she wrote to the Cardinal from Bologna in 1784, where she was paying a visit to Princesse Lambertini, a friend of her girlhood, she referred, with a certain amount of disapproval, to the distribution of orders on St. Andrew's Day.

"I hear that the King continues to lead the same irregular life in Florence, but as he can no longer walk, owing to the size of his legs, he is carried

from one room to another. All the same, his state of health does not prevent him from presenting the Order of St. Andrew to his daughter at the end of dinner, as well as to a certain lord who is with him ; all this is very strange."

Charles had become incapable of writing any letters at all ; the most he could do was to sign those he dictated : this certainly was an advantage to those who were in communication with him, as not only the caligraphy, but the orthography had become so defective that the letters were well-nigh illegible. His daughter Charlotte was not slow to perceive that she might turn to good profit the interruption in her father's correspondence with the Cardinal.

If we remember she had been brought up in a convent in the simplest surroundings, we must admit she had quickly taken up her position as mistress of a royal house, and was wonderfully initiated in all business matters that she could turn to her own account. She was well aware that the Cardinal had left his brother's letters unanswered relating to herself as a sign of his displeasure, and she felt that to gain his favour was of great importance to her present, and especially to her future position.

In order, therefore, to obtain the necessary influence over the Cardinal, she determined to take up the correspondence with him that had been dropped by her father, and the following extracts will show that she had inherited her mother's disposition for intrigues.

She opens the letter of March 24th, 1785, by boldly requesting the Cardinal's assurance that he will continue to pay the pension agreed on to her mother : she then proceeds to criticise the Countess, as follows :—

“I shall seize the first favourable moment to represent to the King, my father, the necessity of instructing the Court of France as to his reasons of displeasure against Madame ; he must beg M. de Vergennes to menace her with the loss of her pension should she persist in misconducting herself. I have taken care to hide from the King that I am in correspondence with your Royal Highness ; in order to be of greater service to him I thought it necessary to make a mystery of what is a great pleasure to myself. The memorandum that your Royal Highness confided to me has my entire approval, and my prudence may be counted on. I have profited by those instructions to turn my father from the idea that you, Monseigneur, approve of Madame's conduct. I think it my duty to inform your Royal Highness that the King intends to go to Pisa during this month to assist at the amusements given in honour of the King and Queen of Naples. I have used all my efforts to prevent him carrying out this project, owing to the state of weakness in which he now is, but without any success. Thank Heaven, he takes more care of himself, and his temper has greatly improved. He made his Easter communion on Holy Thursday with all possible edification.”

Her next letter, written April 9th of the same year, shows greater confidence from the fact that she

was the recipient of business communications from the Cardinal. She thinks that by maligning the Countess she will find the road to the Cardinal's heart, and returns to the old subject of the allowance granted to her father's wife :—

“I am sure, Monseigneur, you must be greatly distressed at the conduct of M. Alfieri and his influence over Madame: your feelings of delicacy, and your principles must be shocked at the neglect of what is due to the glory of your house. The King shares this sentiment, and proves it by the steps he has taken. I think it advisable to confide them in secrecy to your Royal Highness. It was before my arrival, therefore I am exonerated from having had any part in his decision; he represented that the allowance of 60,000 francs must in every case be included in the dowry, and that on no account could the 40,000 francs be claimed as a separate pension; as this sum was only granted by the Court subsidies. You could not give a greater pleasure to the King, your brother, than by calling me by the title that he sincerely trusts you will accord me. I hope very much in your goodness, Monseigneur, and I also suggest that in order to spare my father fatigue, you should persuade him that all correspondence should pass through my hands.”

The tone of Charlotte d'Albanie's letters did not appeal to the Cardinal; and simple and guileless as was his nature, he resented her interference in affairs that were no concern of hers, and he was especially annoyed that the tiresome discussion as to the Countess's dowry should now be insisted on by one who would

have shown better taste in avoiding subjects that related to his sister-in-law.

It also irritated him the persistency with which she pursued the questions that had been reiterated by his brother without cessation, and he was in no mood to comply with her requests.

The little Court passed the winter at Pisa, and the Duchess was received both by the Grand Duchess of Tuscany, Marie Louise, daughter of Charles III. of Spain, and by Caroline, Queen of Naples. This favourable opportunity of throwing stones at the Countess was not neglected by Charlotte d'Albanie, and she herself admits in writing to the Cardinal that she warned the Grand Duchess and the Queen against her :—

“ In a conversation that I had with the Grand Duchess I thought it essential to inform her that your Royal Highness blames Madame's conduct, for whom she fancied you still had sincere friendship. I also acquainted her with the great affection that exists between your Royal Highness and the King ; she appeared greatly pleased at hearing this, but she expressed herself at considerable length in terms of sympathy on the annoyance you and your august brother must suffer from the proceedings of a person who has lost all sense of, and forgotten, what she owes to the illustrious name she bears.”

These gleanings from some of the numerous letters of the Duchess d'Albanie, running incessantly on the same theme, are sufficient to impress us with the mean nature of the writer. Whatever blame could

be attached to the Countess's conduct it came most amiss that Charles Edward's illegitimate daughter should be the one to pass judgment on her. If the Duchess was enjoying the first fruits of the earth, it was through no right of her own, but by the abdication of a woman whose character she seemed to take pleasure in defaming.

We might almost conclude that the real reason of her obtrusive interference in the Countess's affairs came from mingled spite and jealousy that she should only have been thought of by her father for his own convenience to help him in keeping the house ; and not from any personal attachment to her. When she realised how popular the Countess was, and heard universal sympathy expressed for her difficult position, with a feeling of malice she determined to do her best to destroy the interest that was shown for her predecessor ; and her time was spent in trying to prove that instead of being a victim to her father's temper and cruelties, it was the Countess who had driven him into the pitiable state to which he was reduced by her total neglect.

It was perhaps a great deal too much to expect that a child of Clementina Walkinshaw should have any elevated feelings, and a thin veneer of sufficiently decent manners covered the defects of an ordinary, calculating mind. The only merit that can be ascribed to her was that of the careful attention she bestowed on her father up to the day of his death ; and even if the objective was self-interest, still the part she

had undertaken was no sinecure, and required a great amount of patience and forbearance.

Matters remained at a standstill between herself and the Cardinal, and she began to despair of forcing the intimacy that she wished to see established in their relations. Though she was an adept in intrigues, it is not probable that she would have made great advances in the Cardinal's graces had not chance aided her by throwing them together.

In October, 1785, the Cardinal was making his annual visits in the pontifical provinces, and amongst other towns where he spent a few days Perugia was included as a halting-place. The Duchess d'Albanie made a point of being as fully informed of the Cardinal's as of the Countess's movements. No sooner was it reported that he was at Perugia than, without losing a moment, she went there herself, begged an audience of him, and before the close of the interview had not only prevailed on the Cardinal to agree to her father's wish and to recognise her as his legitimate niece, but had also achieved a reconciliation between the brothers.

This last stroke of success was all the more important, as though Charles had latterly led a more regular life, he was doubtless in a most critical state : the epileptic fits to which he was subject were more frequent and of longer duration.

Having had so much trouble in winning the Cardinal's favour, it was not to be supposed that a strong-minded woman like the Duchess would

allow him to leave Perugia without ample assurance that he could be depended on to minister to her father's comfort, not forgetting her own. Her practical, astute mind had at the first glance fathomed the Cardinal's indolent nature ; she formed the correct estimate that he would be a malleable tool in anyone's hands ; and as this was the case, she decided that he ought not to be exposed to influences that might run counter with her own designs.

The fact that the cold climate of Florence would be most prejudicial to her father during the winter, was a legitimate excuse for her proposal that he should pass the coldest months in Rome. In those days Rome enjoyed the reputation of a warm winter resort ; but either the climate has changed, or the present generation are not as hardy as their forefathers. Whatever may be the reason, the severity of winter in Rome is felt all the more from the lingering prestige which still includes the Eternal City in the category of Southern climates, and therefore retards the advance of modern comforts as regards heating the cold palaces.

The Cardinal, always ready to be accommodating, warmly approved of the suggestion, and preceded his brother to Rome in order to make the necessary arrangements. It had been decided that Charles and his daughter should leave Florence 1st December ; the journey was to occupy eight days, with their own horses, for it was hoped that by making such short posts the Prince would be spared undue fatigue.

The Cardinal, having concluded all the preparations against his brother's arrival, returned as far as Viterbo to meet him, and accompanied him to the old Palazzo Muti, that was acquiring an historical interest on account of the refuge it had afforded to so many wanderers, and by the vicissitudes that had taken place within its walls.

The next day the Cardinal brought to the Duchess for her acceptance the same jewels that his sister-in-law had with such dignity and consideration refused. That did not occur this time ; and the Duchess, who already congratulated herself on the wisdom of her move to Rome, was proud to display these magnificent jewels belonging to the illustrious houses of the Sobieski and Stuarts, when she held receptions at Palazzo Muti, or accompanied her father to the theatre. All her movements were chronicled in the *Diario di Roma*, or weekly calendar, of what was taking place in Italy and other countries. Amongst various items of news from Rome in April, 1787, the weekly correspondent related : "The Duchess of Albany gave an evening party in her palace, on which occasion the *Stabat Mater* of Pergolese was sung ; besides other guests of high rank, were to be seen their Eminences Cardinals Boncompagni and Carandini." A few evenings after this concert she offered "a splendid dinner to the Ambassador and Ambassadress of Venice ; the table was laid for twenty-two guests."

The Duchess was able to accomplish without any

sense of humiliation that which had cost the Countess so much.

Reference has already been made how painful to her were the evenings at the theatre, when the claimant to the throne of Great Britain arrived in such a state as to draw on himself the gibes and insults of the crowd.

These visits to the theatre were not abandoned by Charles even during the last stage of suffering. There were many disagreeable results in consequence, of which the following anecdote is but one example. "There was an unpleasant scene at the theatre during the Carnival of '87," writes Bottini, the Envoy of the Republic of Lucca, to the Grand Duke of Tuscany. "Count d'Albanie was openly insulted by the Marchese Vivaldi, owing to which the Marchese was arrested by the troops in the Theatre of the Valle, and by order of the Pontiff was imprisoned in Castel S. Angelo; he was only liberated through the request of Count d'Albanie."

But the Duchess was spared the mortifications that are the penalty suffered by a sensitive, refined nature, and she had no intention of imperilling the position she thoroughly enjoyed, by thwarting her father in any of his whims.

The following interesting remarks on the Prince at the theatre were chronicled by an eye-witness, who said—

"Two stage boxes had been thrown into one for his use, and I could not be otherwise than surprised

to see him almost carried into the box by his servants, who not only lifted him on to the seat, but several times during the evening had to put his wig straight, as it was constantly crooked. I was often told that he was reduced to such a state more by the life he had led than by age. His daughter, the Duchess d'Albanie, being the last hope of the Stuart family, attracted a great deal of public attention. She aspired to the title of 'la Pretendente,' for the sake of the rights she could in that case have claimed, had there been a favourable chance, for the throne of England. As far as the Papal Court was concerned, nothing was done to encourage any pretension on this point, and in Rome they enjoyed no other considerations than those generally shown to strangers of distinction."¹

In order to give greater prominence to her pretensions to royalty, the Duchess did not omit to assist at the solemn Requiem in commemoration of James III. and Maria Clementina the Queen his Consort, that was celebrated annually in St. Peter's.² She never neglected any opportunity that could identify her connection with the House of Stuart.

She also enjoyed driving about in her carriage, on which the royal crown and letters "C. R." were emblazoned, whilst the servants wore royal liveries. Hers was the most conspicuous equipage in Rome, and excited general remark as she took part in the daily *trottata*, or late afternoon drive, when all the rank and fashion were to be seen driving round Villa Borghese, and invariably ended with several turns up

¹ Inedited MS. of Michelangelo del Medicis.

² *Dario di Roma*.

and down the Corso proceeding at a foot's pace, owing to the difficulty of progress in such a narrow street.

Though the Duchess thoroughly appreciated the good fortune that had cast her lot in the path of royalty, her pride suffered considerably that she should not be officially recognised as Princess Royal of England. The *droit du tabouret* conferred on her by France was not sufficient for her aspirations; and after she had carefully thought out the situation, she was by no means pleased at having to admit to herself that she should fall into a most insignificant position on her father's death.

Having come to this conclusion, her task of attending to his wants was considerably lightened by such an unquestionable incentive to prolong his life. Charles Edward on his side tried his best to make her all the returns in his power: had he shown the same kindness to his wife and repaid her devotion to him with half the courtesy he showed his daughter, his last days would have been assisted by the hands of affection, free from all taint of self-interest.

The summer heat was passed in the Palazzo Savelli at Albano, put at the Prince's disposal by the Pope as formerly in his father's days. Many cardinals, besides the Principessa di Santa Croce, and other families from Rome, passed the summer at Albano, and in order to give them some amusement, a small theatre was opened for their entertainment.

Here, amidst scenes that recalled to him his happy

boyhood, as the last hours of his life approached, Charles enjoyed more tranquillity of mind than he had ever allowed himself before. The reconciliation between himself and his brother had contributed in great measure towards calming his irritable temper; besides which the rapid loss of his mental capacities rendered him incapable of exciting himself on every occasion, and he accepted passively whatever the day brought forth.

He would lie for hours on a sofa in a half-dazed state, without paying the slightest attention to what was taking place round him; and the few visitors he still received were painfully reminded of the vanity of human ambitions, at the last sad spectacle of the hero of '45 lying on a sofa in a terrible state of physical and moral decay, languidly caressing a little dog that never left his side. Strange to say, the very few occasions on which he roused himself sufficiently to shake off this moral apathy were those that recalled to him the days gone by. If a Scotch melody was played, his entire physiognomy changed, the dull, heavy expression gave place to one of animation, and his half-veiled eyes lit up with some of their former fire.

One day when he heard the old familiar strains of "Lochaber no more," he burst into tears at a song that revived a flood of memories, and carried him back to the moors and mountains of his own country.

In those long hours that he passed in communing with himself, his soul, hovering on the borderland of

the unknown, had already asserted its supremacy over the grievously tormented body and claimed the dying man's attention. Thus divested of the crushing burden of humanity, we may hope the distressing circumstances of the past were mercifully softened, and all that was noblest and best in the episodes of his early life was disintegrated from what had been sordid and base.

But the end was near. He had returned to Rome at the approach of winter, and on the 7th January an attack of apoplexy was succeeded by partial paralysis ; this was followed by renewed apoplectic fits, and on January the 30th, 1788, the cruel curse of vitality was finally vanquished, and Death, the Deliverer, came to the rescue of the unfortunate Prince.

In pity and in sorrow his few friends put the harrowing scenes of which they had been witness from them, and dwelt on those years when the young Chevalier could be looked up to with esteem and respect.

In the lonely wilds of the Highlands, where the staunch friends of the moorlands were many of them still paying the penalty of their loyalty, tears were shed, and dirges played, as the news of his death was carried from one cotter's shanty to another. Those few remaining who had fought for him repeated the old, yet ever new tale of his courage and bravery, and instilled into their sons' and grandsons' hearts the love of the young Prince, who had been idolised by their forefathers.

The simple Highlanders whom he had led with cords of love, and magnetised by his joyous light-heartedness, were the most favoured of all those who had rendered him service, as they were spared the sight of the utter demoralisation of a man who, if by his descent and the prestige granted to his race, had been credited in his youth with virtues and qualities beyond his deserts, should with all the greater reason have defied fate, and risen above the miserable failings that inspired such compassion. Could he have ridden triumphantly over the untoward chain of events, his life would not have ebbed away under such humiliating conditions.

To Flora Macdonald more than to all others did the news of his death personally appeal as seated by her fireside in that house pregnant with his memory, she went over each incident of the romance treasured for ever in her heart, and felt he was not more dead to her now, than on that day of parting, when after one kiss on her forehead he left her alone, and sad at heart she turned to resume the sad and weary routine of daily life.

The Cardinal decided that funeral honours such as befitted a monarch should be bestowed on his brother, and gave orders that the body should be transported on a litter to Frascati. In royal robes, with the crown of Great Britain on his head, the sceptre in his hand, the great seal on his finger, the sword by his side, and covered with all the orders that had been bequeathed to him by his father and forefathers, the

Prince was laid in a coffin of cypress wood, on which was inscribed : "CAROLUS III. MAGNÆ BRITANNIÆ REX." Accompanied by the priests and a large concourse of the parishioners of the Santi Apostoli, the procession slowly wended its way across the Campagna, the happy hunting ground of the late Prince, to Frascati. At the gates of the town it was met by the Cardinal's household, and with all solemnity the coffin was taken to the cathedral and laid on a richly draped catafalque, standing in the nave of the cathedral ; on it were the royal arms, and a close row of wax tapers lit up the imposing erection.

High Mass was celebrated by the Cardinal the following morning ; it was sung by the most celebrated professors from Rome, and the church was crowded with Roman and English nobility.

The Cardinal put up a monument in the cathedral in memory of his brother ; and having given him all the honours due to his rank, he turned his attention to what he considered was required of him, as being next-of-kin.

He had every intention of asserting his prerogatives and of proving his claims. He assumed the title of Henry IX., gave orders that he should be addressed as "Your Majesty" in his household, changed the ducal coronet on his arms and seals into a royal crown, and coined money and medals in his name. Before long the sick people flocked to him from many miles round as the legend passed from one to the other that the Cardinal had worked miraculous cures

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p. 500, Vol. II.

By kind permission of Cavalieri Strajni, keeper of Medals and Coins at the Vatican.

ONE OF THE MEDALS STRUCK BY THE CARDINAL DUKE OF YORK.



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by these medals that he had previously blessed and given to those who were suffering, by means of which they were restored to health through the virtue and grace accorded by St. Edward to the rightful Kings of England.¹

Besides this marked determination to assert his claims, which was all the more noticeable in an unassuming person such as the Cardinal, he published a protestation to announce that the rights of succession to the throne of England had, owing to his brother's death, devolved on himself. He further declared that owing to the critical circumstances attending their family, he meant to retain the title of Cardinal Duke of York, having considered it advisable to do so for negotiation of business and affairs ; but was to be understood that it represented a kind of incognito, and in no ways took the place of the title claimed by the legitimate successor of James III. King of England, France, Scotland, and Ireland.²

The Duchess, still practical, even in moments of great emotion, had despatched a messenger to Florence to fetch her father's will, which she was well aware had

¹ On one side of one of these medals is St. Michael with sword in hand and under his feet the devil in the form of a dragon, and the motto : "SOLI DEO GLORIA"; on the reverse side is a three-masted ship and these initials : "H. NONO D. G. M. B. ET HIB. CARD. EPISC. TUSC." The Cardinal always wore it round his neck, consequently the initials and design are too much effaced for reproduction. A larger medal has been reproduced by permission of Cavaliere Serafini, keeper of medals and coins at the Vatican.

² Prof. Atti.

been made entirely in her favour as soon as she had arrived to reside in Florence. The Prince had left her his sole heir ; but as might be expected after reading the correspondence with his wife at the time of their separation, the fortune was not considerable.

He had also left numerous legacies which had to be paid, and to enable her to do so, the Duchess willingly accepted the Cardinal's assistance ; who, besides putting at her disposal the large apartment in the Cancelleria, formerly inhabited by his sister-in-law, also handed over to her the allowance made him by the Apostolic Chamber.

In exchange for these considerations on his part, she gave up to him the Crown jewels that had been brought into France by James II., as well as the sceptre, the Order of the Garter, and the Cross of St. Andrew worn by Charles Edward.

A curious diary kept by Monsignor Cesarini, the Cardinal's secretary, and later in possession of Lord Orford, gives most interesting details of the daily occurrences in the Cardinal's family. In referring to Charles Edward's decease he says that after her father's death, a lady was expected from France as *dame de compagnie* to the Duchess, but in the meantime the Principessa di Palestrina was acting in that capacity ; he proceeds to say :—

“Fifty or more cases have arrived from Florence full of valuable legacies of the late King. The Duchess has lost no time in arranging the library, and hanging pictures of the King and other members of the Royal

Family painted by celebrated artists. She has also put up some valuable tapestry that belonged to King John of Poland, and as to the numerous clocks, caskets, rings, etc., that have come to light, it is impossible to enumerate them. Only the archives have been given to the Cardinal Duke, as being of importance to him in regard of the succession to the throne ; on other matters he remains quite ignorant ; the Duchess has put all that is most valuable belonging to the collection in a large room, and has shut the door of communication to the apartment."¹

The Duchess did not long outlive her father. She fell ill during the summer of 1789 at Bologna, in the Palace of Prince Lambertini, nephew of Benedict XIV. Here she succumbed to the effects of an operation in November of that year, at the age of thirty-six, and was buried in the cemetery of the Certosa.

All that she had inherited from her father she left to the Cardinal, on condition that her mother, who lived at Fribourg, in Switzerland, under the title of Comtesse d'Alberstorff, should be paid the pension that had been guaranteed to her, as long as she lived.

The Countess and Alfieri were in Paris when she received the news of Charles Edward's death, and Alfieri noted with surprise that though the past could only be associated in her mind with great unhappiness, yet she was sincerely affected on hearing of his decease. He considered this another of the many proofs she had given him of her good heart, and

¹ *Diario di Enrico Cardinale di Yorck.* Printed at the Chiswick Press. Only 75 copies. 1875.

expressed the opinion that, "notwithstanding the disparity of years, her husband would have found in her a charming companion and friend, and even a loving wife, had he not continually irritated her by his rough, unrefined, and disagreeable manners."¹

Being thus entire mistress of her actions, it was naturally expected that the union so ardently desired by the Countess and Alfieri when it was impossible of realisation, would be consummated without delay ; but the prolonged postponement of this wish, had given time to Alfieri's poetic mood to get the upper hand of any matter-of-fact considerations. He had arrived at the conviction that it was all very well for ordinary mortals to shackle themselves with the weighty fetters of marriage, but he, following in the footsteps of Dante and Petrarch, preferred to be bound by the less compulsory chains of love : thereby his soul could soar to higher realms of inspiration without being trammelled by the vexatious monotony of household cares, so fatal to the flight of genius.

These being Alfieri's views in his present mood, the Countess established herself in a house she had taken in the Rue de Bourgogne, Faubourg St. Germain, whilst he lodged a little distance off in the Rue du Mont Parnasse ; and not till a later date did they inhabit the same house.

The question as to whether a legal marriage ever took place between them or not remained for a long

¹ *Vita*, p. 257.

time a disputed point ; it was even asserted there had been a marriage ceremony, but it had been kept secret chiefly out of regard for the Cardinal of York. Alfieri's mother seems to have been uncertain in her mind whether it were so or not, as, shortly before her death, she wrote to her son and expressed the hope that the link that bound him was one to secure his happiness in this life and the salvation of his soul in that to come.¹

But though there were these reports and counter reports, the most acceptable version is that no marriage ever took place. Soon people ceased to trouble their minds on a matter they considered of slight importance, because the Countess herself, as her position was firmly established in both France and Italy, seemed to make no objection to any solution that did not deprive her of Alfieri's companionship.

We may suppose that though the Countess, at the time of her enforced absence from Alfieri, had revealed the wish to become his wife as soon as circumstances permitted it, owing to the repeated breaks in their intercourse, she felt that the turbulent flow of the first moments of passion had in a great degree calmed down ; so that without difficulty she listened, and conformed to a connection that she considered would be productive of far more lasting and deeper affection than could be expected from the bondage of marriage.

¹ Reumont, p. 353.

Besides agreeing with Alfieri on his view of the marriage question, the Countess may have had another reason for not wishing to change the standing order of arrangements. Not without a certain amount of incongruity, she showed a decided wish to retain all the claims to royalty that still belonged to her.

It might have been supposed that, having voluntarily effected a separation from her husband, she would willingly have laid by for ever a title that carried with it the remembrance of so much unhappiness ; and not so very long before, she had frequently expressed the wish to give up all her royal and social privileges could she but be with Alfieri. But on this point, as well as on that concerning her marriage with him, her mind had considerably varied ; and from the moment that, ceasing to be the Prince's wife, the prerogatives of royalty to which she had a right were shorn of much of their prestige, she became far more susceptible to any neglect on that score than had ever been the case before her separation.

This craving to be recognised as a royal princess increased to a greater extent after Charles Edward's death ; and visitors to the house in the Rue de Bourgogne were as much impressed by the stately demeanour of the Countess herself as by the royal style observed by her household. The various details in her mode of living reminded them on being shown into her presence, that they were expected to give obeisance to a sovereign.

Her appearance was still very striking ; and while her dignified manners commanded respect, her kindly interest in those she addressed took away all feeling of constraint.

On entering the salon the first thing that struck the eye was a large chair under a canopy on which were woven the royal arms of Great Britain ; all the plate was likewise engraved with the royal arms. And while her friends contented themselves with giving her the title of Countess d'Albanie, her servants always addressed her as Your Majesty, and in those convents she visited on Sundays and feast days she was received as a sovereign. With this love of the incense offered at the shrine of royalty it must have been most gratifying to her to be addressed by Madame de Staël and the Duchess of Devonshire as "ma chère Souveraine" and my "dear Queen," when in later years she entered into a most interesting correspondence with these two celebrated ladies.

It was only from the moment of which we are writing that the Countess through her own merits became a recognised individuality. Hitherto she had chiefly been known and spoken of as the unfortunate wife of Prince Charles, and beyond passing expressions of sympathy on the misfortunes that had befallen both husband and wife neither of them had occupied much attention out of Italy.

But whilst she herself attached importance to her privileges as a sovereign it was for her intellectual capacities that she now attained the zenith of her

fame, and those who had first come to offer their respects to the widow of Charles Edward returned to enjoy the cultivated conversation and interesting society of a highly gifted woman.

It was not easy at a time when literary, political, and social interests were at their highest in Paris for a stranger without previous connections to make her way in a capital where wit and lightness of manner were only the superficial attractions under which intelligence and thought lay concealed.

But the salon of the Rue de Bourgogne needed no patronage to secure its success. The Court the Countess held might well satisfy the instinct of a sovereign, and flatter her pretensions to be a woman of superior abilities ; and with grace and tact she ruled all the subjects who asked for nothing better than to gather round her to do her homage.

Here in the evenings of 1789 might be seen Necker, Montmorin, and Malesherbes, and the Maréchal de Mailly, who formed a little group ; and if with apparent unconcern they took part in general conversation they were not entirely free from anxiety regarding their precarious position. Out of these four men, de Mailly, Malesherbes, and Montmorin perished on the scaffold as the penalty of their services to the King, whilst Necker was deprived of office by a monarch who blindly cut himself adrift from all those who offered him their support. The Austrian Ambassador, Comte d'Argenteau, a relation of Countess d'Albanie's, and the Baron de Staël were

amongst the diplomats, and engaged in animated conversation with the Nunzio Monsignor Dugnani, who enjoyed great popularity in Paris.

Marmontel, La Harpe, and Beaumarchais also frequented the Countess's salon ; they were a prominent trio in literature, and could lay claim to the questionable distinction of having contributed to the fall of the monarchy and to the advance of the Revolution by their works.

The atmosphere was so highly charged with electricity that even the dispute between the Glückists and Piccinists as to the highest standard of music, or discussions on the innovations in the rules of dramatic art as instituted by Diderot, had a tendency to embitter, and became an excuse for adding fuel to the fire which was ready to leap into flames.

One of the most brilliant ornaments of the salon was the charming Madame de Flahault ; from the first moment of meeting she and the Countess felt drawn to each other by bonds of sympathy, and their friendship never varied from that day up to the time of the Countess's death. The Countess, her senior by ten years, affectionately called Madame de Flahault "her spoilt child," to which she gracefully replied, "I prefer to be your young sister." M. de Flahault was one of the victims of 1792, and after his widow had sought refuge in England, where she wrote many novels that gained a good deal of notice owing to her knowledge of character and charm of style, she eventually returned to Paris and formed a second marriage.

with M. de Souza, the Portuguese Envoy ; shortly after his marriage he resigned his post, and shared with his wife the charms of literary pursuits. When Countess d'Albanie returned to Paris after some years she found the same affection from Madame de Souza, unchanged by absence, who, without doubt, remained the most sincere and truest of all the Countess's friends.

Madame de Staël was also one of those who added to the brilliancy of the Countess's salon, and perhaps amidst her numerous accomplishments and claims to fame it was approximately the time that she added fresh lustre to her name by her noble courage in presenting to the revolutionary Government an address she had herself drawn up in defence of Marie Antoinette. She shared her father's patriotism and devotion to the monarchy, and in 1792 worked out a plan of evasion for Louis XVI. ; but neither Necker nor his daughter could alter the destined flow of events or inspire the King with the judgment and decision in which he was totally lacking.

Alfieri was not as enthusiastic as the Countess about the attractions of the life in Paris, and had it not been that Didot was occupied in publishing some of his works he would have shown still greater impatience at living there. He had always professed a great antipathy for the French, and though at this time the antipathy had not assumed the proportions of positive hatred to which we owe the *Misogallo*, a satirical work he published after the events of 1793,

against French policy and their erroneous conception of liberty on which they laid such stress, nevertheless he disliked them as a race, and preferred not being in their midst.

There were other reasons affecting Alfieri's vanity which contributed to his dislike of Paris. At Siena, Pisa, or Turin he alone was the shining light, and if others ever emerged from darkness, it was due to his power only ; but here he was but a unit in a dense nucleus of men, most of whom, if not superior to, were certainly on an equality with, him in culture and intelligence. This was most annoying to a vain nature such as Alfieri, so totally unaccustomed to consider others as being on equal terms of ability with himself ; and consequently he felt ill at ease, and remained silent and taciturn during the brilliant conversation round him. He was still further irritated when one of his rivals one day asked him if he wrote tragedy or comedy. That he should not yet be recognised all over Europe as the founder of Italian tragedy was an insult he never forgave.

Perhaps André Chénier was the man with whom Alfieri formed the closest friendship in Paris ; they both shared a love of the classics, and both sang in verse the praise of liberty, which was expiated by Chénier on the scaffold in 1794.

Fortunately for Alfieri, Ippolyte Pindemonte, of whom mention has already been made, had lately arrived from Italy. Though five years younger than Alfieri, and of a totally different disposition, the

Veronese and Piedmontese had become fast friends from the day they first met when travelling in southern Italy some years previously.

Pindemonte's poems are melodious, pathetic, and not without charm ; he especially excelled in descriptions of scenery, and here and there a feeling for dramatic perceptions is visible in his works ; but his talent lacked variety and his style strength, to enable him to attain any fame in dramatic versification. No greater contrast of character could be imagined than that of the two friends ; and if Alfieri's vivacious, proud, and rather bitter spirit was often modified by the influence of Pindemonte's gentleness and moderation in his opinions, he equally felt the advantage he drew from contact with Alfieri's impulsive, masterful nature.

Alfieri was very much occupied with the revision of his last tragedies, and before handing them to Didot the publisher he read them over to his friend, whose ear through cultivation and study easily detected a certain crudity of expression and exaggerated laconism in Alfieri's mode of phrasing. He often stopped him whilst he was reading his work, and suggested alterations, but though Alfieri sought Pindemonte's advice, he was not always in the humour to accept constant fault-findings ; and on one occasion, when he was more than usually irritated at the critic's repeated interruptions, he jumped up, seized his hat and stick, and left the house in a fit of temper. He had the mortification, on returning some hours later in a more quies-

cent mood, to find his faithful friend, unperturbed by the author's courtesy, still hard at work correcting the tragedies.

When Alfieri was able to control his annoyance that any work of his should need correction, he was not totally ungrateful for the thankless task he had thrust on Pindemonte ; he jocosely presented him to the friends who came when they were absorbed in business, as *ma blanchisseuse*, and pointed out that it devolved on Pindemonte to clean and polish up his works.

Pindemonte was as great a favourite with the Countess as with Alfieri. He generally passed his evenings in the Rue de Bourgogne, and after the company had dispersed, they remained chatting till a late hour, Alfieri sitting one side of the chimney-piece with the cup of chocolate he invariably had before going to bed, whilst Pindemonte opposite him was regaled with an *omelette soufflée*.

The two friends assisted at the taking of the Bastille, when Alfieri not only danced for joy on the release of the prisoners, but wrote a stirring ode descriptive of the scene.

Though Pindemonte agreed to a great extent on Alfieri's political views, he was more deliberative and calm in his reflections ; and whilst Alfieri in after years rushed into an opposite extreme, and cursed the liberty whose praises he had sung, Pindemonte, though equally scandalised and disgusted at the terrible pages of the revolution, remained truer to the principles of his youth.

After the emigration of the Conte d'Artois and of the Polignacs, the assassination of Foulon and his son-in-law, Berthier de Savigny, who were the first victims of the fury of the mob after the taking of the Bastille, Pindemonte felt he had already seen enough ; and he left Paris for England in September, 1790, having first obtained his friend's promise to follow him to a country where the love of order justifies independence of action and liberty without producing a dissolution of every law inseparable to the government of a people.

The day following that on which the King and Queen were forcibly conducted from Versailles to Paris amid the ribald cries of an infuriated mob, the painter David dined with the Countess ; and referring to the scenes of the previous day, he expressed the opinion that it was to be regretted that the crowd had lost that opportunity of murdering the Queen, for as long as a termagant such as she was lived, there could be no peace.

The Countess and Alfieri glanced with horror at the painter, and saw the looks of dismay depicted on the faces of all the guests at the terrible words pronounced by one of the company : Mazzei, a Florentine by birth and agent to the Court of Poland, got up abruptly and left the room, observing as he did so that not only were painters and poets more or less mad, but they were often prophets as well.

After this episode Alfieri concluded that Pindemonte had acted wisely in leaving a town where even

guests at his table were fired by such sanguinary sentiments. In the autumn of 1790 the home in Paris was broken up, and, taking his horses with him, he and the Countess went to Normandy, and in the spring of the following year proceeded to England.

CHAPTER VIII

THE HOME ON THE LUNG' ARNO

Walpole's description on the Countess in England—Tour in the provinces—Return to Paris—Escape to Italy—Casa Alfieri—Political difficulties—The Villa on the outskirts—Correspondence with friends—Return to Florence—Acquaintance with Fabre—d'Azeffio's reminiscences.

DURING the summer of 1791 Walpole wrote to his friend Miss Berry, then travelling in Italy:—

“I leave you to judge of the upset state of things which characterises our epoch, when I tell you that within these last two months, the Pope has been burnt in effigy in Paris, Madame du Barry, mistress of Louis XV., has dined with the Lord Mayor of London, and now the widow of the Pretender to the throne has been presented to the Queen of England. It was discussed at Lady Mount Edgecombe's supper-party last night. I am told the Countess d'Albanie, beautifully dressed, and not at all embarrassed, was announced as Princesse de Stolberg on being ushered into the King's presence. The King and Queen Charlotte talked to her on general subjects, after which she had a longer conversation with the Dukes of Gloucester and Clarence. The Queen watched her all the time with great attention. Whatever places of amusement she frequents, she is always conducted to the royal box. A few days after the audience she was invited to dine with the

Prince of Wales, where she met Mrs. Fitzherbert. For my part, I see nothing royal about her : she has fine eyes and good teeth, but I do not think she can ever have been better looking than she is now ; she is very German in type, but her manners are polite and easy."

It was only natural that the Countess's first visit to England should excite some interest and many comments ; but while it was adversely criticised by those who remained antagonistic to anyone connected with the House of Stuart, the faithful few who had welcomed the news of Charles Edward's marriage as a harbinger of brighter days to come now came forward to show their respect to his widow.

No doubt her presentation at Court created some surprise ; but undue prominence was given to an act to which she attached no importance.

The Countess had always felt a strong desire to visit England, for which she experienced a sense of proprietorship ; and though her chief reason for accepting Charles Edward's proposal of marriage had been but a mirage, and the throne promised her was occupied by another Queen, she took a far more expansive view of life than was generally the case with the women of her day, and always contrived to find some good out of all evils ; therefore she determined to gratify her curiosity and learn something by her visit to England : and for that reason, and no other, did she ask to be presented at Court.

But no one had more enemies than she ; and

thinking it necessary to throw out suggestions for an action they could not explain, they hinted, that as the pension assigned her by the French Court was undoubtedly most precarious owing to the critical state of affairs in France, she had come to England solely to supplicate the King personally for pecuniary relief.

In the *Edinburgh Review* of that date mention is made, that Lord Camelford was spoken to on this matter ; but from all we know of Countess d'Albanie, any plea of mendicancy was so totally opposed to her nature that we may take it for granted a great deal of exaggeration attended these insinuations.

Were it true that the payment of the 60,000 francs was already withheld from France, it was clear that her financial position was greatly in peril. She, as we know, had no fortune of her own ; Charles Edward had entered into negotiations of marriage with her solely as a speculation initiated by France ; and having handed over to her husband at the moment of separation all that had been settled on her save the 60,000 francs, she could only follow the example set her by her husband and other members of his family, who had subsisted entirely, ever since their banishment from England, on pensions from various Courts of Europe, and no blame had been attached to them for doing so.

The Countess appreciated the civility and courtesy shown her in England ; and while accepting hospitality, was a quiet observer of the habits and customs of the English.

During the few months she passed in England she kept a diary, which was published under the title of *Souvenirs de voyage en Angleterre*. Her appreciations are most original on the country she judged from her point of view—a view which was eminently French. She criticised the faults, but she also recognised the good points of a nation she esteemed and admired, and the following observations on the life in town are very characteristic :—

“Though I knew that the English are very mournful, I never imagined that life in the capital would be as depressing as it was to me. There is no society, only crowds. As the majority of families pass nine months of the year seeing few friends besides their family, they make amends for their seclusion by living in a vortex of gaiety the remaining three. Most of the day is lost, as no one goes to bed till four a.m., consequently they cannot get up before midday ; the afternoon is passed in taking exercise and in paying visits. It is difficult to know how to employ the few remaining hours, owing to the damp climate totally wanting in sunshine. I think all the provincial towns are preferable to London, at least they are less gloomy and smoky, and the houses are better. Owing to everything being taxed, even the windows, I noticed there are seldom more than two or three windows looking on the streets ; this leads to the houses being narrow and inconvenient, and as land is dear they are built of a great height. The most important privilege enjoyed by England is her political liberty. The people are adapted for freedom, they are used to it ; and whilst respecting their masters, they know they are equal in the sight of the

law. If England was governed by a government that oppressed the people, both they and the country would lose their great position in the world. The nation is melancholy, without any imagination, and one of its principal characteristics is a love of appropriation."

There is a great deal of shrewdness in these reflections, as in the rest of the diary, which bears traces of a philosophic mind. She was then thirty-nine, and, having seen different sides of life, her thoughts were more matured than those of most women of her age. She was keenly observant of both men and things, and usually, without hesitation, formed a correct opinion on matters that required thought. She visited countries as an intelligent traveller, taking note of the prevailing characteristics of each. England she considered a unique country, and Holland struck her as being "a fine testimonial to human industry."

At the end of the summer Alfieri and the Countess made a tour through England, not omitting Birmingham and other manufacturing towns. They lingered awhile at Oxford, where in the library of Christ Church their attention was drawn to a facsimile of the signatures of those who had signed the death-warrant of Charles I. The original document is in the House of Lords.

Though the Countess admired Windsor, she did not consider the view from the terrace as striking as that at St. Germain, and she preferred the palace of Hampton Court, where she could satisfy her love

for pictures. A visit to Herschell at Salthill was not omitted in their itinerary, when the simplicity of the great astronomer, and his unpretentious way of speaking of his great discoveries, surprised them almost as much as the wonders with which he made them acquainted.

Having thus visited the principal places and objects of interest, Alfieri became impatient of any further delay, and wished to leave. He had not found the same pleasure as formerly on this visit to England : the novelty had worn off, and he complained that the climate gave him gout ; and as most of his money was placed in French securities, he was pre-occupied at the scarcity of coin, which was being replaced by paper money in which he had no confidence. He therefore hurriedly decided to leave, and after a short visit to Brussels, where the Countess stopped to see her mother and sisters, they returned to Paris and took a house in the Rue de Provence. This was a more modest residence than the one of the Faubourg St. Germain. Here they passed the winter and the early part of the summer of 1792 ; but events were moving with such alarming rapidity towards a general conflagration, that after the scenes of the 10th of August, resulting in the murder of the Swiss Guards and the imprisonment of the King, Alfieri decided that they must abandon France without delay.

With a certain amount of difficulty the passports were obtained, and they left precipitately, and not an hour too soon.

Two days after their departure their house was sacked, most of Alfieri's valuable library was destroyed, comprising the complete edition of his tragedies. Had they delayed taking flight, they doubtless would have shared the fate of other victims. The Countess had used all her influence to persuade Madame de Flahault to accompany them to Italy ; but she declined to leave her husband, who expiated his loyalty to the King in the terrible massacres of September : not till then did the unhappy widow consider her own safety, and take refuge in England.

The Countess and Alfieri were at Tournai when she heard of the tragedy that had befallen her friend's husband, and of the murder of the Princesse de Lamballe. Alfieri, mad with rage at his own losses, and at the barbarities committed by a people whom he had erroneously qualified as the apostles of liberty, scornfully exclaimed, "Till now I considered the French a great people ; this day I have learnt who are the most despicable."

He left France with hatred in his heart : any lingering sentiment for the country or the nation was banished from his mind for ever, and in a state of great agitation at the horrors that were taking place, he proceeded to Verona to pour out to Pindemonte his contemptuous hatred of the French. He told him how deeply he repented at having ever "dishonoured his pen" by writing the ode on the taking of the Bastille, by which event he only saw the transformation of an absolute into a constitutional monarchy.

Alfieri found further vent for his disgust and hatred of the revolution by his diatribe the *Misogallo*, the opening lines of which are descriptive of his indignation at the tyranny of liberty. Having to some extent calmed his excitement through work, combined with the pacifying influence of Pindemonte, in the autumn of 1792 the Countess and Alfieri proceeded to Florence, and settled themselves in a house on the Lung' Arno, near the Ponte di Santa Trinità. To this day the following inscription over the door reminds the passer-by that the great tragedian lived and died here : "VITTORIO ALFIERI PRINCIPE DELLA TRAGEDIA QUI CON MAGNANIMI SENSI MOLTE ANNI DETTÒ E QUI MORI."¹

The Countess must have returned to the place that she left under such disagreeable circumstances, twelve years previously, with a certain amount of dread. Her flight from Palazzo Guadagni, and the reasons that had given rise to the necessity for such a desperate step, was brought back to her mind with renewed clearness as she walked and drove through the old streets, every stone of which was well known to her ; but after the first painful impressions had passed away she settled down to life with the poet, and for the next ten years entirely devoted herself to her friend.

While retaining the vivacity of her early youth, she was more composed and quieter in her manners than

¹ "Under this roof Vittorio Alfieri here produced his fine works, and here died."

formerly. Dutens, the traveller, after many year's experience of people, by which he had acquired the habit of forming a just estimate of their capacities, mentions in his *Souvenirs d'un Voyageur qui se repose* that he was most favourably impressed by the Countess, whom he found to be a very cultivated woman of superior abilities. He said she possessed the art of attracting people of all nationalities and of political views absolutely in opposition to each other ; and so unique was her talent of *l'art de tenir un salon* that, on entering Casa Alfieri, all hostility was banished, and won by the Countess's dignified and gentle demeanour, those most inimical to one another felt they were on neutral ground.

As result of the hard schooling to which she had been obliged to submit during the years she had passed with Charles Edward, she was better able than most women to adapt herself to the caprices of a poet.

By many, Alfieri was judged as hard and unfeeling : it was the opinion not only of French critics, but also of Goethe, who said : "Alfieri is interesting rather than agreeable. His works typify his nature ; and the tormented style of his productions may enable his readers to understand the torments he himself went through in producing them."

No one better than Alfieri himself felt the drawbacks of his impulsive nature, and the hindrance it was to his work ; and for that reason the calm, reflected judgment of the Countess was of invaluable

assistance to him. He was particularly agitated at this moment on account of all that had been sequestered belonging to him in Paris; and though he addressed himself to the French minister residing in Florence, and begged above all for "six large cases containing about 3,000 volumes" to be returned to him, he neither obtained the books nor any redress for the loss.¹

To form another library on the same scale was not the work of a day, and Alfieri in order to occupy the time turned his attention to the stage.

Though his and the Countess's fortune had been considerably impaired by the troubled state of affairs in Europe, they were yet able to lead a very comfortable existence in a town like Florence, where less luxury was displayed than in Paris or London. The chief expenses were those incurred by Alfieri in his stables and through his love of the theatre. He insisted on putting up a small stage in his house, and gave many representations of his tragedies.

He was so pleased at his own success as an actor that, in 1795, he accepted an invitation to Pisa on the occasion of *la luminara*,² and agreed to perform

¹ *Vittorio Alfieri*, Bertana, p. 242.

² The *luminara*, or illuminations, up to the last few years took place in Pisa on the 17th of June every third year in honour of St. Ranieri, the patron saint of the town. On that night the whole of the Lung' Arno appeared like a crescent of innumerable masses of diamonds. The three bridges were also ornamented with temples in a blaze of light, studded with stones, and the whole effect was so splendid that Pisa on that night could only be compared to an enchanted city.

in his tragedy of *Saul* before an audience composed of those most learned in literature and the drama.

When accepting this flattering proposal, Alfieri expressed regret on hearing that his appearance was expected with intense interest ; he said those who had seen him play in Florence could assert that he knew his words, and recited with intelligence, but to be heralded as a genius, before he had given proofs of his capacities, was doing a very bad turn to his mediocrity.

Though this was written with an affectation of modesty, no one was deceived as to Alfieri's good opinion of his talents. The criticisms were not entirely favourable as to his impersonation ; great fault was found in his exaggerated declamation, a fault which could be easily accounted for by those knowing his character.

Whilst Alfieri was thus occupied in the distractions of the stage, he found an unfailing resource in the versatility of the Countess, whose interest in all the topics in which he took part made her an exceptionally charming companion.

She was well versed in the literature of four languages ; and the important part she took in conversation revealed a remarkable aptitude for retaining and reasoning on the principal points of the subjects under discussion. In her own words she says :—

“What a pleasure it is to pass one's time in studying the ideas and opinions of those who have recorded them for our use ! It is the only pleasure left to

a reasonable person of a certain age, for conversation in comparison is often weak and incomplete. Now and again one comes across a good talker out of the usual run, but they are very rare, and certainly the evenings I pass alone with the poet are far more agreeable than when we have company. We discuss all we have read, and time flies without our noticing it. Most of my days are passed with my books ; they are much the best company, and make one think."

This love of reading remained with the Countess to the end of her days. She was as great a bibliomaniac as Alfieri. With fixed attention she seriously studied all branches of literature, always with a pen in hand, and she made notes on her impressions of the work that occupied her.

Her criticisms were not always free from a certain severity ; and some observations she passed on a writing of Madame de Staël regarding the influence of the passions on happiness, in which the Countess found fault with the obscurity of style, led to a retaliation on the part of Saint René Taillandier, who condemned the criticisms as being erroneous and unjust.

It was impossible for a woman who occupied such a prominent part in the world of art and learning not to have her share of disapproval from antagonistic critics, in many cases the result of jealousy and envy ; but the Countess, far from being annoyed at misrepresentations of her intentions, modestly accepted any criticism as a compliment.

The years from 1793-8 seem to have been a

happy period of repose and tranquillity to both the Countess and Alfieri ; all ambition on her part was subservient to what served his interests, while Alfieri's activity seemed to increase in proportion with his years.

He had begun gradually collecting books to replace the library he had lost, but this almost mechanical labour did not hinder his intellectual activity. Envenomed all the more against a race he had every reason to hate, and before the greatest outrage of all had taken place, he commenced writing a defence of the King, which the Countess considered the finest written by his defenders. The execution of Louis XVI., 21st January, 1793, had led to the termination of the *Misogallo*. The concluding stanzas of this satire, when he apostrophises the Italy of future years, would alone make his name famous ; and still under the influence of the atrocities he had witnessed in Paris, he continued to write on the same theme.

Ever since then the political situation in France was daily becoming more complicated.

Both France and England by their requests and menaces were causing great anxiety to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ferdinand III., a young Prince greatly beloved in Florence. His preoccupations increased all the more in 1796, when the French troops entered Italy by way of Bologna, occupied Leghorn, and took possession of all the spoils such as had not already fallen into the hands of the English

fleet, which had raised anchor as soon as the French troops appeared.

Subsequent to these preliminaries of hostilities, the invading troops left the country ; but the battle of Rivoli, and fall of Mantua, the seizure of the Pope's possessions, and the Treaty of Campoformio, by which Austria handed over to France the Venetian territories, gave small hopes of any lasting peace. In fact, France lost no time in asserting her authority over Italy, and not only in 1798 did she overrun her northern provinces, but she promulgated laws in Rome and Naples, by which Rome was reduced to democratic slavery, and the power of the Holy See was crushed. It may well be understood that this unsettled political aspect began seriously to influence the position of the Countess and Alfieri ; so much so that they had to consider the advisability of leaving Florence.

A short time previous to these events, which by their importance absorbed all other thoughts, Countess d'Albanie had formed acquaintance with Térèsa Mocenni, and found in her both a friend and an agreeable woman, with whom she could discuss most topics. The Mocenni were Sienese and friends of Alfieri ; Mocenni was a rich merchant, but so tiresome a man that had he not been well off, and the husband of an interesting woman, no mention would have been made of him. When the Countess opened a correspondence with Térèsa, she often addressed her letters to Ansano-Luti, the Director of the Uni-

versity in Siena and a mutual friend, in order that the letters should not fall into the hands of the "fault-finder" and "fidget," as she designated the husband.

Térèsa could boast of holding a salon in the small town of Siena in which Gori, one of Alfieri's intimate friends, Bianchi, a man of culture, and Ansano-Luti were the principal lights.

The correspondence between the Countess and Térèsa is very large: it commenced towards 1797, and continued up to the time of Térèsa's death. In one collection alone, in the Ambrosiana Library at Milan, there are 122 letters from the Countess addressed either to Térèsa herself, or, as the political situation became more embarrassing, to Ansano-Luti for greater security. The Countess did not write for idle pleasure, but frankly stated her opinions on what was taking place in the country, and occasionally was not sufficiently diplomatic as regarded her statements.

In one of the collections are still extant thirty-four letters she wrote to Vittorio Mocenni, Térèsa's son, in whom she took special interest, as he was Alfieri's god-child. In these letters there is no word on politics: they are full of advice and exhortations on his studies and education. On this same subject she often wrote also to his mother, and constantly copied out maxims and sentences from her favourite French philosophers and sent them to the boy, suggesting that he should translate them into Italian, so that he would not only learn the language, but would be enabled to form a conception of what was beautiful.

Térèsa was very sympathetic to the Countess, and on Signora Mocenni's departure for Siena, she expressed her regret in the following terms :—

“ November 14th, 1797.

“ I regret more than I can say, my dear Térèsa, that you could not remain in Florence, and that I did not know you sooner, for you are the only Italian woman that I ever cared for, or have been attracted to. Pray believe that all that concerns you is of interest to me, and that you will find in me a friend who will never change.”¹

The next letters chosen from the collection are of interest, as showing the preoccupation of the moment through which her present happiness is temporarily clouded, and recalls to her mind what she had suffered in the past.

“ February 27.

“ You are quite right, my dear Térèsa, when you say that many would envy my fate ; as regards having the poet as my friend, I entirely agree. But the world does not know what both he and I feel, nor all I suffer when I see him so agitated at all that is taking place, when we see the wicked triumphant on all sides, and when it is impossible to know where one will find oneself from one day to another, with even the prospect of prison without having merited it. I am disgusted with everything. I now see life as it is, and since the revolution I have a profound contempt for humanity ; I feel that I have even become hard, and the welfare or misery of the multitude has ceased

¹ *Di un carteggio della Contessa d'Albania conservato nell' Ambrosiano di Milano.* G. Galligaris.

to touch me. Were I to lose our friend, I should have lost everything, and yet can we count on anything in this world?"

Again, on July 9th, 1798, she writes as follows :—

"The poet and I often speak of you, my dear Térèsa, and he sends you friendly messages. The French have garrisoned the citadel, and though they have assured the King of Sardinia of their protection, it is thought that they wish to turn his country into a democracy by protecting the rabble, and preventing him from punishing them. It is a terrible moment, but all the same one must not allow oneself to be downhearted. As regards myself, ever since my earliest childhood I have known misfortunes ; I was the first of my mother's children, and as she wished for a boy, I was most unwelcome to her. In order to get rid of me, she married me to the most insupportable man that ever existed, a man who combined the defects and failings of all classes, as well as the vice common to the lower orders, that of drink. You see, my dear Térèsa, what affection I bear you, that I should speak to you in such confidence, sure as I am of your good heart and feelings towards me."

This sad reference to the sorrows of her childhood and early youth are referred to with such simplicity that it seems more like a sigh wafted to a sympathetic ear than the words of complaint.

Great detriment was done to a naturally fine character by the early training under a selfish and worldly mother, who completed her daughter's sacrifice in agreeing to a marriage that could not possibly

terminate otherwise than it did. No friendly hand was held out to help her throughout all her difficulties and temptations ; on the contrary, the errors and faults into which she was driven through the example of loose morals were unfeelingly condemned ; and by her reticence and dislike of inflicting her trials on others—save as on this occasion, when she found a friend with whom she was in complete sympathy—she laid herself open to still further blame.

The King of Sardinia to whom the Countess refers was Charles Emmanuel IV., who, in 1798, was compelled to abdicate, and now sought a temporary refuge in the outskirts of Florence.

All the Grand Duke's attempts at neutrality and his efforts to be on friendly terms with both England and France had proved unavailing, and towards the end of 1798 the English, conjointly with the Neapolitans, occupied Leghorn. France seized the opportunity with alacrity, entered Florence 25th March, 1799, and ordered the Grand Duke to leave the town within twenty-four hours. He and many distinguished families retired to Vienna, whilst others went to Sicily.

Alfieri's hatred to the French was so openly discussed that many feared he would suffer some disagreeable consequence from the aggressive attitude he had assumed towards them ; but with the scenes he had witnessed in Paris still fresh in his mind, he did not wait to see the “odious invaders.” A few hours previous to the entry of the French troops he

entirely dismantled his house, collected everything that belonged to him, and with few servants, but many books, retired with the Countess to a villa outside the Porta San Gallo, on the slopes of Montughi.

The month of March is the commencement of the most beautiful season for the country round Florence. Spring is close at hand, the hedges are already in leaf, and the budding roses are just visible, only waiting for the moment to transform terraces, walls, and grounds into one vast rose garden. The sloping hillsides, broken by cypresses and olive groves, form a protection to Florence. Though disorder and confusion were prevailing in the town, yet the seclusion of the retreat was absolute ; news travelled with far greater speed to Paris or London than to the inmates of the villa.

Here, unmolested, Alfieri passed the next few months, and by his own words expresses his contentment on his life with the Countess.

"We were both very much occupied with literature, and the Countess being sufficiently versed in English, French, Italian, and German, is well read in these four languages, besides not being entirely ignorant of Latin. Being thus able to discuss all subjects with her, I do not think I have ever been as happy as then, when owing to circumstances we were absolutely alone and far from tiresome preoccupations. But few of our acquaintances visited us—and they rarely—to avoid attracting the attention of the military authorities."¹

¹ Reumont, p. 302.

Again, in a letter to the Abbé di Caluso, he thus expresses his happiness :—

“The lady who is with me is my only consolation, my support, the anchor of my life, as I hope she feels I am to her. In two, many burdens can be borne that would be too heavy for one alone.”

As soon as the Countess was settled at the villa she resumed her letters to Térèsa. They describe to us in a few telling words the situation of the moment.

“*29th March, 1799.*

“You must know, my dear Térèsa, that on the 25th 2,000 troops entered Florence ; they are supposed to be French, but they are revolutionary Cisalpines and Piedmontese, organised as line regiments under the command of French officers. With the exception of a few cowards or thieves who had been sent away, but managed to come back, no one has made any raid. Only the Jews danced round the tree that was planted incognito at one a.m., and the same rogues have torn down the arms of the Grand Duke from the Post Office and the theatres. It is not clearly known where the Pope has gone—some say, to Parma.”

The next letter is of special interest, as by her own proving the Countess gives evidence that her acquaintanceship with Fabre, the painter, is of old standing. In this letter, dated 16th May, she alludes to him as if he had already been discussed in previous letters to Térèsa, and expresses surprise that her friend should have thought it possible he would accept a

post offered him under the new régime, and then proceeds to say,—

“He has been thirteen years in Italy, and for the past seven years he comes daily to the poet, whose opinions he shares, whose works are his creed. Judge for yourself, then, if he could accept such a post. I must on this point render justice to all the French artists established in Florence for a long time past. They have none of them accepted anything that might be against the interests of the country. It is said that the Austrians are at Sarsana and at Modena. A great battle has taken place at Alexandria, where Moreau was defeated, and he has retreated to Genoa with his staff. Barras has arrested Rouvel and Merlin on the accusation that by their acts of depredation and terrorism they are the cause of the inimical feeling regarding the French revolution in Italy. The Directoire wished to re-establish the guillotine and the reign of terror in Paris, but a formidable insurrection was the result of this attempt. No one—or at least but few—care to fight. The hostages have been embarked for Marseilles or Nice to the number of 160. It is hard to understand the reason, as those in Florence have kept as clear as I have of all affairs. It is said that the Pope died on the way from Turin to Briançon, but it is only an *on dit*.”

The reference of the Countess to Fabre seems to offer a fitting occasion to introduce him to our readers, and relate the origin of an acquaintanceship that eventually drifted into great intimacy.

François Fabre was born at Montpellier in 1766.

He was the son of a painter, and after studying with David in Paris, he soon superseded his father as an artist. Having obtained the Premier Prix from the Academy in Paris, Fabre went to Rome in 1787 and dedicated himself to serious study from the antique. In 1790 he came to Florence, where the greater part of his life was passed. The incident of the appointment that he had refused, as related by the Countess, refers to the charge that had fallen on him to decide on the choice of pictures, from the Pitti Gallery, that were demanded for the Napoleonic Museum in Paris. He tried to avoid such a disagreeable task ; but though, as the Countess said, he first refused, such stress was laid on his qualifications to decide so delicate a point, that rather than allow a decision of such great importance to fall into less conscientious hands, he accepted the post ; and owing to his careful discrimination, the abstraction of the works of art from the Pitti Palace was not so disastrous as had been feared.

Soon after his arrival in Florence he was presented to the Countess and Alfieri, and while with the latter he was entirely in sympathy as regarded politics, and shared his implacable aversion to the devastators of countries and society, to the Countess he was of invaluable assistance in the development of her artistic faculties, and criticised her notes on the galleries with which she was acquainted and her impressions on the great masters.

It was not long before Fabre became a daily visitor

to Casa Alfieri, and through his easy conversation on various subjects he was a welcome guest. Paul Louis Courrier, who was qualified to know a man's worth, said : "He speaks well on any subject, and if the conversation happens to turn on art, it is the greatest pleasure to listen to him."

In 1796 he painted the portraits of the Countess and Alfieri that are to be seen in the Gallery of the Uffizi. It is probably the best portrait of Alfieri ; and he was so pleased with it that he was inspired to write the well-known sonnet on his own likeness, which is as descriptive of himself as the picture.¹ This same year Fabre also painted a charming picture of the poet and the Countess together, the reproduction of which is here given by the courtesy of the Marchesa Alfieri. Alfieri is represented as looking up from his tragedies, with which he is engrossed, to listen to the Countess, who is reading to him a paper on which, in the minutest handwriting, can be distinguished an epigram on the Abbé de Caluso. The lines run as follows : "Poiche il destino ci vuol pur divisi dei due, cui stai sculto perenne in petto, Abbiti almeno Tommaso egregio, i visi." ("As destiny parts you from two friends who always bear you in their hearts, they humbly beg you, Thomas, to accept this souvenir of their likeness.")

This picture was given to the Abbé de Caluso by Alfieri in 1796 ; on the death of the Abbé it passed into the possession of the Marchesa Alfieri di Sostegno,

¹ Appendix C.



PORTRAIT OF ALFIERI, BY FABRE.
Uffizi Gallery, Florence.



another branch, but the sole remaining representatives of the Alfieri family.

On the 1st of June the Countess again takes up her pen to relate to Térèsa how she passes her day in the villa at Montughi.

"I am glad to see that you are as pleased as we were on hearing of Moreau's victory. I am in good health, and we are very quiet here in the country. Up to the present I have seen nothing of any military display, not having been near Florence since the 25th March, and I have hardly left my garden, or those belonging to my neighbours. I step from my room into the garden and in again for dinner, after which I occupy myself and go to bed at half-past nine, as I get up at half-past four. The life I lead is almost that of a nun, only instead of chanting the praises of God I admire His works. I have a great deal to tell you, but it is necessary to remember to keep one's head on one's shoulders."

On the 15th of July the Countess announced her intention of closing for the time being her correspondence with Térèsa, and writes in rather a vexed tone to reprove her friend on having divulged the contents of her letters to others.

"I am told that in this week's *Moniteur* there is a very injudicious letter written by your husband, full of exaggerations and heresies. This does not surprise me, but I must confess I think it strange that the journalist should be sent letters to give to the public. I have no wish that mine should fall into his hands, and therefore I shall wait for better times before writing to you again. It is

but another privation I must suffer in the name of liberty as understood by France. I must also add that I know you occasionally read my letters to others. As long as eight months ago someone with whom I am not personally acquainted wrote to me from Siena on this subject. Farewell, my dear Térèsa, I hope the day will come when it will be recognised one can do what is quite innocent without being the talk of the public."

In consequence of Macdonald's defeat on the Trebbia in the month of June, 1799, the French were obliged to evacuate Tuscany; and to the great delight of the Florentines the French troops left Florence hurriedly, taking with them all the spoils on which they could lay their hands: they were succeeded a few days later by 200 Austrian hussars, and in Alfieri's words to the Abbé de Caluso, "the sun shines once more."

The Abbé de Caluso, with whom Alfieri had enjoyed an uninterrupted friendship ever since the days of his youth, merits a few words of notice.

He was a native of Turin, and was of an old and distinguished family. Long and distant travels had brought him into contact with the first scientists of Europe, which he turned to account on his return to Turin, where his brother was the King of Sardinia's representative to the Court of Portugal. The Abbé was given a prominent position as mathematician and scientist. He was twelve years older than Alfieri, and though totally opposed in the tenour of their lives

and in doctrine, with wonderful tact he never lost his good influence over the poet ; and by his goodness and patience in listening to theories propounded by Alfieri, on which the Abbé was far more competent to judge but never betrayed his superiority, he entirely obtained the poet's confidence, as well as that of the Countess.

The Abbé was turned to on every occasion, whether of joy or sorrow ; and when the impulsive letters sent off heedlessly by Alfieri showed he was especially out of humour, he always exercised a soothing influence on the excitable susceptibilities of his friend, and by his answers, full of self-control and discretion, imposed calm and restraint.

There was no reason that the Countess and Alfieri should not return to Florence after the evacuation of the town by the French ; but they were loath to leave their rustic retreat, and lingered on in the villa till the month of August.

They now recommenced their habitual town life, and the Countess again opened her salon, which was all the more appreciated owing to her long absence in the country.

Every stranger of distinction sought to have an introduction to a house which was fast attaining wide celebrity owing to the Countess's talent for holding a pleasant salon.

A charming friend of Pindemonte's, Countess Isabella Teotochi Albrizzi, was warmly received by the Countess and Alfieri. She was born in Corfu and

married a Venetian patrician. In Venice she could almost lay claim to rival Countess d'Albanie in popularity, and she reigned supreme over all the literary and artistic world. She counted amongst her admirers Foscolo and Byron, by whom she was gracefully named the "Venetian Staël."

There were several English ladies in Florence at that period, who, by requesting to be presented to the Countess, showed their desire to make the acquaintance of a woman who had attained such fame. Amongst other well-known faces were to be seen Lady Bessborough, who by her own culture and intelligence was all the more appreciative of the Countess's ready wit and conversation. Lady Webster, afterwards Lady Holland, divided her affections between the love of Italy and the literature of the country, and was also a constant guest in Casa Alfieri.

Apparently there was nothing to disturb the harmony that reigned in their home, and after reading the spontaneous expressions of perfect contentment that existed between the Countess and Alfieri, it is strange to find that soon after their return to Florence malicious tales were circulated, detrimental to both. No doubt can be entertained that they were genuinely happy during the few months they passed out of Florence; and it is not to be supposed that a capricious man such as Alfieri would voluntarily have prolonged an existence that would have been monotonous, had not he and the Countess been united in

sentiment and interests. With her letters to Térèsa Mocenni before us, and his to the Abbé de Caluso, in which he never omits to speak of her in most affectionate terms, it is hard to believe that both were playing a part, and though most opposed in character, were both equally insincere.

It therefore seems inexplicable that Alfieri should be represented as having resumed the life of a gallant, and that she had already accepted Fabre as her admirer.

It cannot be denied that on the death of Alfieri she lost much of her prestige ; and those who had been the most charitable and lenient in criticising the Countess felt great surprise and disappointment that she should have made so false a move and have accepted Fabre's attentions.

By so doing she lost caste, and had it not been for her remarkable literary abilities and her recognised proficiency upon all questions of interest, she would soon have fallen into oblivion, and have ended her life ignored and forgotten : she saved herself by her striking individuality.

In regard of the accusations of infidelity on both her part and Alfieri's, it is only in recent years they have been brought to light ; and attacks prejudicial of the Countess are still more marked in the last works edited on Alfieri, many of which have been published in connection with this year (1903), the centenary of his death,¹ and therefore must be accepted with reserve.

¹ *Vittorio Alfieri*, E. Bertana, 1902. *Asti e gli Alfieri*, E. Masi, 1903.

A few remarks on the Countess as related by Massimo d'Azeglio in his memoirs refer to this subject. The eminent Italian statesman never looked favourably on the Countess, as may be gathered from the general tone of his observations ; but though his impressions were not free from malicious comments, he describes in a clever way his first introduction to her, and relates an amusing episode which brought his visits to her salon to an end.

Azeglio introduces us to Alfieri in 1801, and describes that at the age of four he was taken by his mother to Fabre's studio to pose as the Infant Christ in a picture of the Holy Family on which the painter was working. After a time the baby-sitter betrayed the restlessness usual to most children of his age, and resorted to tears at being kept so long in a state of nudity on his mother's knee. No coaxing was of any avail, but his attention was suddenly arrested by a deep voice bidding him to be good ; these words were spoken by a tall man dressed in black, standing close to him, whose light eyes, marked eyebrows, and red hair brushed off his forehead increased the striking pallor of his face. The commanding tone produced instantaneous effect : by Alfieri's peremptory remonstrance, the boy in his astonishment at being thus rebuked ceased kicking and crying, and Fabre was enabled to finish a picture which was placed in a church in Montpellier ; and thus Azeglio is handed down to posterity in his sacred impersonation. While still a mere boy he was taken to Countess d'Albanie,

to whom he repeated some verses ; he remembered that she rewarded him with sweets that she reached off the top shelf of her bookcase by getting on a chair. His remarks on her figure are not complimentary. "I can still see before me," Azeglio says, "the ample proportions of that celebrity, dressed as she always was, in white, with a large Marie Antoinette fichu draped over her shoulders."

Massimo d'Azeglio was one of the juveniles who met every Saturday evening at the Countess d'Albanie's. No one enjoyed more than she did to gather young people round her ; and by her magic art of attraction children were drawn to her as much as older people.

Azeglio, in speaking of these Saturday evenings inaugurated chiefly for the amusement of boys and girls, says :—

"The whole scene is still before me as I write. Near the fireplace opposite the windows looking on the Lung' Arno was the large chair in which the Countess invariably sat in her white dress, smiling on the children who gathered in the bow window to eat the ices and cakes with which they were served. Meanwhile, my father, who had been taken prisoner by the French when they entered Piedmont, which was the reason of my family exiling themselves to Florence, entered into political arguments, and gave his views on the state of affairs in Europe to M. Lagenswerd, the Swedish Minister."

As the years passed, and the boys became youths, Azeglio does not hide his opinion as to the position

he concluded Fabre held in Casa Alfieri. The memoirs were written many years after Countess d'Albanie's death, and it seems unnecessary ill-nature towards a woman who had always shown him kindness when he mentions the report, that Alfieri went out regularly every evening to visit a French lady ; but whether the Countess's relations with Fabre were an excuse for these visits, he could not say. He could only affirm that, if as happened more than once, the servants locked the street door before his return, he knew that it had led to scenes ; and once it was asserted that Alfieri had exclaimed, "Surely I am sufficiently a slave without having to feel that I am a prisoner as well."

Marchesa di Prié, Azeglio's aunt, and one of those annoyingly observant women whose eye nothing escapes, told him in later years that she herself had noticed that an understanding existed between the Countess and Fabre at some theatricals given in Casa Alfieri. Fabre was leaning against the door at the end of the row of chairs where Marchesa di Prié was seated. At first she thought it was on herself that his eyes were constantly turned ; but when she further noticed that while looking fixedly in the same direction, he deliberately lifted the back of his hand to his lips and kissed a ring on his finger, she could not control her curiosity ; and glancing round to see for whom these silent protestations of admiration were intended, her eye fell on the Countess, who was equally exchanging looks with her admirer.

At a much later date Azeglio, having occasion to pass through Florence, went to see Fabre. He found him very ill with gout being nursed by the Countess; but the impression he carried away was that with advancing years they had both become soured, and their union had not produced the friendship and satisfaction they mutually hoped for.

The very last time that Azeglio entered the Countess's salon his visit terminated with a catastrophe which must have been amusing to everyone but himself.

The Saturday evenings of the days of his boyhood were still in full swing, the only difference being that most of the boys and girls were grown-up men and women; but with this exception, and that of a largely increased foreign element owing to the Countess's travels and voluminous correspondence, all remained as formerly: she still sat in the same chair, and the ices still formed the principal refreshment as of old.

On this particular evening Azeglio had arranged to go with two friends to the Pergola; and wishing to combine both the theatre and the party, he and his companions only arrived at Countess d'Albanie's at an hour when the greater part of the company was dispersing.

Not daunted, and yet not without a certain trepidation that he was not quite correct in arriving at such a late hour, Azeglio advanced and presented his two friends to the Countess. No one could show plainer than she when she considered a slight had been offered

her. On this occasion she scarcely bowed, and turning to Prince Borghese, who was standing near her, she said, loud enough to be heard by the few remaining guests, "A quelle heure viennent ces messieurs ?"

Azeglio hearing her tone of displeasure, became greatly alarmed at his temerity, and tried to eclipse himself behind a little group he saw in conversation near the buffet.

He was relieved to find amongst them the old Sardinian Minister in Tuscany, who responded to the young man's rather gushing salutation to one so much his senior, with the courtesy of an old diplomat and man of the world. The Grand Duke had held an official reception that evening, and the minister was in full uniform covered with gold lace, and a blaze of decorations.

Azeglio was gradually recovering from the effects of the mortifying scene that accompanied his entry, and in order to give himself still greater courage had the unfortunate inspiration to seize an ice off the table. Whilst still talking eagerly to the good-natured diplomat, dreading each moment that he would turn to someone more worthy of his attention, Azeglio attacked the ice. It had been made to represent a fish, and to carry out the resemblance, was both hard and round : no sooner did Azeglio try to insert the point of the spoon into the impenetrable fish, than to his horror it resisted the attack, and instead of yielding to pressure, it bounded off the saucer and struck the minister's broad ribbon with the force of a bullet ;

after which, still intact, it rolled over the carpet to the feet of the Countess, when finally the head and the tail parted company.

This was Azeglio's last evening-party in Casa Alfieri. He closes the episode by saying that as he wrote he still remembered how he rushed out of the salon and down the stairs into the street, not daring to look behind him.¹

¹ *I miei Ricordi*, Massimo d' Azeglio.

CHAPTER IX

DEATH OF ALFIERI—THE COUNTESS CALLED TO PARIS

Alfieri's failing health—His death—Grief of the Countess—She publishes Alfieri's last works—Her claims for the subsidy from France—The death of the Cardinal of York—His losses previous to his death—The Countess receives aid from England—Arrival of Eliza Baciocchi in Florence—The open disapproval of the Countess on the state of affairs—She is requested to go to Paris—Reception by the Emperor—His courtesy—Her return to Italy.

THE occupation of Florence by General Dupont in October, 1800, was the first consequence of Napoleon's victory at Marengo. That eventful day decided the fate of Italy for the next fourteen years, and laid her under the power of France for this lengthened period of time.

This event was a renewed source of agitation to Alfieri, and his first impulse was again to retreat to the Villa, and thus avoid daily irritation at the unavoidable contact with a people he despised ; but when he found that no disturbances had marked the General's arrival, and everything proceeded pacifically, he conquered his ill-humour, and the home on the Lung' Arno was not abandoned.

The peace of Luneville was most favourable to the

improvement of his finances ; and on receiving gold instead of paper from Piedmont, Alfieri was obliged unwillingly to admit that some good had come from French despotism.

He turned this brighter state of affairs to the profit of his stables, and purchased some valuable horses and new carriages. He was daily to be seen in the Cascine driving himself in his tilbury, wrapped in a loose red cloak ; his equally red hair blown off his forehead and falling on his neck, produced a most startling effect, and caused amazement to the people of Florence.

Alfieri's health was fast declining. This affected his temper, and he brooked no contradictions or disapproval at his originalities. His irritability and capricious moods must unpleasantly have recalled to the Countess the years passed in Palazzo Guadagni. He became more and more misanthropic in his habits, and nothing annoyed him more than being told someone wished to call on him. The story of the placard that he fastened on his door to guarantee himself from intruders, on which was written in large letters, "Count Alfieri is not at home," is still remembered in Florence to this day.

General Miollis, the French Military Governor in Florence, who combined a certain literary culture with the qualities that distinguished him as a soldier, expressed his desire to make the poet's acquaintance. To this act of civility on the Governor's part Alfieri refused to comply in such curt terms, angrily com-

plaining of "the persistent annoyance of the General," that from that day Miollis, who was entirely innocent of any sinister design in asking to be presented to the tragedian, repented of the advance he had made, and became his enemy.¹

Besides driving in the Cascine in his strange attire, Alfieri was often recognised taking solitary walks, chiefly outside the town, composing verses as he went along. Everything was a subject for his sonnets. One day as he passed through Porta Pinti he chanced to see a herd of pigs waiting near the gate of the custom-house whilst the swineherds were paying duty. The pigs were making most abominable noises, but this very unromantic episode became the theme of one of his most powerful sonnets against France, in which he affirms that the grunting of the Etruscan swine is pleasanter to his ears than the dulcet voices of the most fascinating French sirens.

Except riding or driving, Alfieri was rarely to be seen in public save on the few occasions he accompanied the Countess to the opera. The excessive study from which even her influence could not distract him overtaxed a constitution not naturally robust, and greatly weakened by repeated attacks of gout. Added to this, he was most abstemious in his food, refused both wine and coffee, and reduced his meals to the minutest proportions.

He himself felt that his life was drawing to a close, and nothing is such a direct refutation of the stories

¹ *Vittorio Alfieri*, E. Bertana, p. 257.

detrimental to the Countess and himself as his touching preoccupation as to leaving her : this anxiety increased and preyed on his mind as his strength waned, and he confided his fears in a letter to the Abbé de Caluso : "The person whom I have honoured and loved above all things in the world will tell you one day what I have suffered. I implore you to do your best to be with her and console her."

Some years previously, in writing to his Sienese friend, Térèsa Mocenni, to sympathise with her on the loss of someone to whom she was attached, he said :—

"I think with horror of finding myself one day in your position. I do not pray to be the last, yet how can I wish the better half of myself to accept what I should never have the courage to bear? These are terrible thoughts. I often have them in my mind. I even write verses on the subject in order to gain some relief in thus easing my soul ; but never can I accustom myself to the idea that either I must be left alone or *la mia donna* must be left by me."¹

On carefully reading the correspondence of both Alfieri and the Countess in which either refers to the other, we notice that neither in writing nor even in conversation did they allude to one another by their Christian names. When he mentioned her it was always as "la donna mia," "la Signora," or "la dolce metà di me Stesso" ; whilst she spoke and wrote of

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

him as "le Comte," or more generally as "cet ami incomparable." It would seem as if a feeling of mutual respect towards themselves, as well as that they considered due to others, withheld them from laying stress even to their most intimate friends on the close ties that bound them.

On the fly-leaf of some of the sonnets copied out by the Countess during the summer she passed apart from Alfieri near Rome, is to be seen in her handwriting : "Sonetti di Psipsio copiati da Psipsia in Genzano il 17 Ottobre 1783, anno disgraziato per tutti e due."¹ Apparently she had invented these peculiar names of affection, under the impulse of her grief when Alfieri left her, but it was quite an exception to their rule of only referring to each other in the most respectful terms.

Up to the very last hours of his life Alfieri worked incessantly. It was almost in the act of putting the final touches to his comedies and setting his papers in order that he succumbed to an attack of gout which flew to the lungs, October the 8th, 1803, in the fifty-fifth year of his age.

With the exception of a few legacies, the will ran as follows : "I leave all my goods, landed property, plate, books, and MSS. to the Countess Louise d'Albanie, Princess of Stolberg, widow of the Count Albanie Stuart, who died in Rome, January, 1788."

In another paper containing his last wishes he

¹ "Sonnets of Psipsio, copied by Psipsia in Genzano, 17th October, 1783, a sad year for both."

notified that he left it entirely to the Countess to decide concerning the publication of his posthumous works, and earnestly conjured her to accept this charge ; any writings she considered unadvisable to publish he begged her to destroy, rather than leave to others the task he had confided solely to her.

Thus this interesting romance was brought to a close ; and notwithstanding reports to the contrary, no serious differences of opinion had occurred to disturb the continuity of life in common. Alfieri had by no means a malleable nature : he was not only hard, but tyrannical towards those to whom he was the most attached. He himself relates in the *Vita* how many women he had detached from him, owing to his overbearing temper and impatience of opinions differing from his own.

All his defects were exaggerated through his morbid susceptibilities ; and when he was overworked, these faults became very pronounced in his daily life.

It was a strange fate that had led Alfieri to the feet of the Countess, and decreed that she was to exchange her mission of sick-nurse for that of ministering to the intellectual progress of a mind capable of the highest attainments but without the needful balance to restrain the strong impulses that overmastered him.

In both cases the Countess achieved what, to most women, would have been an impossibility.

Though she was by nature warm-hearted and of a kind disposition, her first experience by which she learnt how sad life can be, had in many ways modified

her character ; and while preserving sincerity and frankness, such noticeable features in her conduct, she lost a great deal of her former expansion and became more reserved. By cultivating the habit of self-control she obtained complete possession of Alfieri ; and through her unbiassed discernment, she rendered him far greater assistance than would have been the case had she depended on the ephemeral aid of affection only.

In the following pathetic words the Countess tries to express her grief to Baldelli, a friend of Alfieri's who through marriage was distantly connected with the Stuarts : she addressed the letter to him in Paris, where he had an official appointment :—

“I have lost everything : consolation, support, society, all has gone from me ; and I am alone in this world that now appears to me a desert. My life has become odious, and gladly would I end a career of which I am tired. It would have been unbearable the last ten years owing to the terrible events that have taken place had it not been for my companion who gave me courage. I used to love reading, but now I can only read the works of our friend who has left many MSS. for publication. He killed himself with work, the last six comedies were fatal to him. For several months he would not take sufficient nourishment, for fear that indigestion might interrupt his work. He died in six days' illness, without knowing that death was near him and without pain, just like a flickering candle that finally burns itself out. I have no further happiness in prospect ; no one, at my age, can replace such a friend as he was. We were twenty-six years

together without a moment of grief coming between us, save the unavoidable annoyances that are the lot of all ; not many women can boast of having had such a friend as he was to me."

To the Greek professor, Villoison, who as an experienced Greek scholar was often consulted by Alfieri, she wrote in much the same strain :—

" I have lost everything ; I feel as if my heart had been torn from me ! I cannot yet persuade myself I shall not see him again. Imagine that for the last ten years I have not left him for a single moment. I was always with him whilst he worked ; I used to implore him not to fatigue himself, but it was useless ; the sad events of the times made him work all the harder, in order to forget what was taking place. His head was always occupied with serious subjects, and this country affords no distraction. I now regret that I did not insist on taking a voyage, it would necessarily have changed his thoughts."

To another friend she wrote :—

" Five months have passed, but it seems to me it was only yesterday that I lost him. Hitherto philosophy has been of assistance to me on all occasions, but now I find it useless. I try to read Cicero, Montaigne, and other authors who may give me a little courage, but I am crushed."

It is curious to note that in these few extracts testifying to her absolute despair, the Countess should never allude to Fabre, who, if the current reports were true as to the rôle he had played in her life for

some years, ought to have been of great assistance and comfort to the Countess in her solitude.

She was in that state of despair when the soul appeals for help, for support, from anyone, or anything ; and all facts would tend to confirm the impression that it was now only, that she drifted into an intimacy without realising to what it exposed her, and that because she could not die, as she pathetically said, she accepted this ill-advised consolation.

Fabre was thirty-seven years of age, and the Countess fifty-one, when he submitted to be more her man of business and a coadjutor in her love for art than to hold any other definite position in her house. He certainly occupied a place quite in the background of her life and thoughts ; but he appears to have had sufficient tact and philosophy to recognise that if the honour of succeeding to Alfieri had been conferred on him, he in no ways replaced the poet.

Having unburdened her sorrows to those friends who had been the most appreciative of Alfieri, and therefore could sympathise with her loss, the Countess felt that she would best recover her peace of mind and honour her friend's memory by attending to his last wishes.

At her request the Abbé de Caluso came to Florence in the spring of 1804, and with his assistance all the MSS. were put in order, and many of the poet's posthumous works were published by Piatti in Florence, but stamped as being published in London :

a device often resorted to in those critical times in order to escape annoyance from the censor.

The Abbé and the Countess next turned their attention to Alfieri's autobiography, and spared no pains to continue the narrative from the point at which it had been laid aside by him up to the last hours of his life. They also eliminated certain expressions, especially those in reference to his hatred of France, that might have occasioned disapproval.

Were it for this alone, all those who have an admiration for Alfieri must feel they owe a debt of gratitude to the Countess for so conscientiously carrying out his last wishes, and by publishing the *Vita* a lasting benefit to all students of literature has been conferred.

Alfieri was buried in the church of Santa Croce, the resting-place of those who have dedicated their lives to the advancement and progress of their country.

Canova was commissioned by the Countess to design and execute a fitting monument to the memory of a man who was worthy to be numbered with those whose noble and great works still live to recall them to all perpetuity.

Willingly Canova entered into the spirit of an order to immortalise one for whom he had always felt a sincere admiration. On completing the monument it failed to satisfy his conception, and rather than put up a work which, though it might meet with the approval of others, his conscientious scruples condemned, he at once started another design, re-

solved to achieve the idea he had formed and produce a monument that represented his inspiration.

Having put Alfieri's papers in order, and carried out his last wishes to the best of her ability, the Countess found it necessary to devote some attention to her own affairs. She was still the recipient of the pension of 4,000 crowns from the Cardinal of York, unremittingly paid by him up to the day of his death, even when reduced to great straits himself; but notwithstanding this sum, and the fortune left by Alfieri, her means were not considerable for the position she occupied. This fact came to her notice with greater force when the heavy publishing accounts of Alfieri's last works were laid before her, though these were but small items compared with the expense of the monument that would have to be met.

The Countess had never forgotten the subsidy she used to receive from France that she still considered due to her, and at this moment of her financial pre-occupations the wish to realise the claim again took possession of her mind. She apparently forgot for the time her openly expressed aversion to the Consul, her animosity towards the French, and the contemptuous terms in which she had spoken of French society, when she compared it in a letter to Sismondi to the *cloaca maxima*.

In reference to this question of her pension most interesting facts have come to light through some letters written by her to a friend in Paris. These letters from the Countess are for the most part un-

known, and they show us with what tenacity she followed up a matter that, though she had allowed it to lie dormant for so many years, had never been lost sight of.

We owe these letters to the heir of a certain Chevalier Angiolini, a constant visitor to Casa Alfieri, whose correspondence with the Countess on this subject in 1804 has recently been published.

Angiolini was one of those men who knew everyone, was invariably to be seen in the most exclusive circles, and never omitted to be at the feet of the most fashionable women of the day. He had travelled a good deal, was an agreeable conversationalist, and he had written a pleasant description of his travels, by which he could lay some claim to the title of author.

By his versatility and talent of acquiring popularity he entered into the favour of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and was named by him Minister Plenipotentiary in Rome; this appointment in 1795 decided Angiolini to follow a diplomatic career.

In 1798 the Grand Duke sent him as Minister to Paris, where he remained some years, with the exception of an enforced absence during the occupation of Tuscany by the French, passed by Angiolini in Germany till 1801, when he resumed his diplomatic functions in the French capital.

It was in May, 1804, that the Countess first took Angiolini into her confidence, and having observed that he was always enchanted to be at the disposal of

anyone of importance, she made up her mind to turn his influential position to her own advantage.

The first letter she addressed to him commences with an appeal to his friendship in reference to a matter concerning her favourite sister Gustave, whose acquaintance Angiolini had made during his recent visit to Frankfort. In this letter the Countess expresses her earnest desire to see her sister advantageously settled, and as she is aware that the Spanish Ambassador, lately arrived in Paris, is an intimate friend of Angiolini, she suggests that he should do his best to arrange a marriage between them.

The Ambassador had formerly been acquainted with Gustave, and had led her to suppose that no sooner did his fortune permit it, he would wish for nothing better than to lay before her a proposal of marriage ; and no one, added the Countess, would be more admirably suited than her sister to do the honours of an Embassy.

Up to this point the letter is a model of pre-occupation for Gustave's welfare, but the next phrase gives us the key to the Countess's personal interest in the arrangement :—

“ My sister also tells me that if this alliance takes place she could employ her husband to recover the subsidy that, though refused me, is mine. M. Sabatier¹ will already have informed you of the pressing state of affairs. I therefore all the more draw your attention to what I ask you regarding my sister, and

¹ Sabatier was a friend of the Countess and intermediary between Angiolini and herself.

as you know her personally you will do so with greater interest. It is a consolation to me to make those who are dear to me happy ; I can never be so myself, having lost that *ami incomparable* who had such a regard for you. We used often to speak of you. I am very unhappy ; it is terrible at my age to lose a friend of twenty-six years' standing, with whom my life was passed ; and the world has lost its charm for me. Had I not occupied myself to some extent with study I should have become mad. You, with your warm heart, cannot fail to comprehend what my loss is ! His friendship was sufficient for me ; I have never held any account of what flatters most women, vanity and ambition have had no part in my actions. Forgive me for unburdening my soul to you, but I am so desolate that, without wishing it, I speak of myself. I trust to your old friendship for me, and hope that you will give me further proof of it on this occasion. Do not forget me, and count on my heartfelt gratitude. Your old friend,

"LOUISE DE STOLBERG, C. D'ALBANIE."

Gustave was the youngest of the Countess's three sisters ; all the same, at this date she was in her forty-seventh year, and we must conclude that the Ambassador had forgotten any former predilection for his old flame, as she died unmarried in 1837.

Another letter from the Countess quickly follows on the first, and it is also very curious ; the interest for her sister has already given place to her own more urgent affairs.

"Your old friendship for me, my dear Chevalier, makes me hope you will be of service to me. I know

in what esteem and regard you are held by the Senator, Joseph Bonaparte. I therefore draw your attention to this opportunity which enables you to interest him in the matter concerning the reiterated promises made me by his brother the First Consul. M. Sabatier, who has done his best to be of service to me, will tell you the state of my affairs and of all the promises made to me. I have as much confidence in your good heart, my dear Chevalier, as in your ability, and therefore you will obtain for me the justice the Consul always appeared willing to grant ; it is only owing to the amount of important work on hand that the ministers have not been able to carry it out. I have no doubt that anyone who has credit with the First Consul would influence him to realise his good intention. I count on you to give me this proof of your friendship, and to occupy yourself with my affairs. You may depend on my gratitude, and the interest I shall bear for you through life.

“ Your very humble and obedient servant,

“ LOUISE DE STOLBERG, COUNTESS D'ALBANY.”

To this appeal Angiolini hastened to reply, and assured the Countess that as far as it depended on his efforts nothing should be omitted to secure the successful result of her petition.

Sabatier meanwhile informed Angiolini that he on his part had entered into negotiations, and had drawn up a memorandum which he intended to place in the hands of Julie Clary, the wife of Joseph Bonaparte, who had undertaken to forward the paper to Talleyrand. The “ Memorandum concerning the widow of the Pretender Stuart ” runs as follows :—

"In Germinal of the 11th year (21 March—19 April, 1802) the First Consul gave instructions that the books and MSS. belonging to the Countess d'Albanie were to be returned to her with those of the immortal Vittorio Alfieri. The Countess, on being told that they formed part of the library belonging to the great Napoleon, declined to accept them, saying that had she all the books in the world it would be an honour to her to offer them to so appreciative a reader: the only thing she requested was the restitution of the 60,000 francs which had been settled on her and the Princess Gustavine her sister, who had never set foot in France, and she drew attention to the fact that they were both born in Saxony in the palace of Stolberg belonging to their father. This being the case, it is very strange that the name of the Princess Stolberg, widow of the Pretender to the throne of England, should be inscribed on the list of emigrants. The First Consul quite corroborated this opinion, and replied to the Consul Cambacérès, who spoke to him on this matter, that everything should be restored to the aforementioned Princess, and he forthwith occupied himself concerning the books and MSS. This was but just, as it had been decided by the Council of State the 9th Thermidor (27 July, 1801) that the accusation of emigration would not be applied to a stranger; therefore in this case there could be no question but that the Princess was exonerated from all the blame attached to emigrants. No one has greater claims to the Emperor's justice than the sister-in-law of the Cardinal of York, the most important in the ranks of present and future pretenders. The mission of Napoleon the Great is to inflict humiliation on the arrogant English monarch: and were it only for this fact he necessarily becomes the Protector of the

unassuming widow of Charles Edward, grandson of James II., whose birth and courage destined him for the throne now occupied by the afore-mentioned presumptuous Monarch. I have therefore in her name requested the High Court of Justice and the Minister of Finances to receive the orders of the First Consul regarding the just claims of this Princess. I am convinced that were this Memorandum laid before His Majesty the Emperor, it would promptly be attended to."

No notice appears to have been taken of this explicit statement concerning the Countess's claims, as a month later she returns to the charge and again writes to Angiolini :—

"The Emperor is on the point of starting for a three months' absence. I am sure that it only requires one word from the excellent Madame Julie to guarantee justice towards a Queen without a throne, and what is still worse, without means, as long as what belongs to her is not paid. Pray do your best to obtain that one word! and I beg you to let me have an answer in time, by the courier who leaves at ten o'clock to-morrow."

The answer may have been given verbally, for there is no trace of it amongst Angiolini's papers. One thing is sure, that neither Napoleon's promises, Madame Julie's influence, nor Talleyrand's authority, procured the payment of the 60,000 francs.

The writer of this most interesting article on the correspondence between Angiolini and the Countess observes that it is strange she should not have

addressed herself to the Empress without making use of intermediaries. Ever since the acquaintance formed in Paris in 1788, the Countess appears to have remained on affectionate terms with Josephine, judging from a letter written by the Empress to her in 1801, commencing as follows:—

“I cannot sufficiently thank you, my dear friend, for the kind and touching interest you take in Bonaparte and myself. Such a friendship as yours offers great consolation in the midst of preoccupations inseparable with the dangers to which one is exposed, and renders the expression of sentiments like yours all the more valuable. I often see M. Lucchesini,¹ whose character and intelligence I so highly esteem; we always speak of you, and I like him all the more for his attachment to you.”²

There certainly is a good deal of ambiguity attached to this correspondence; and when we remember Alfieri's anxiety to have what remained of his library restored to him, in 1793, we cannot refrain from wondering, supposing that Napoleon's offer in 1802 was *bond fide*, why the Countess should have refused a proposal of such importance to Alfieri.

If, therefore, the offer were genuine, we may only conclude that in her eagerness to obtain the money she did not wish to lose this opportunity of asserting a claim which was of greater value to her than the books. At the same time she may have hesitated to

¹ The Russian Ambassador in Paris.

² *La vedova d'un Prætendente e Napoleone I.* G. Sforza, 1895.

address the Empress personally on the matter, as her strong feeling against the Emperor was very well known, and at the time that she appealed to Angiolini's assistance her antipathy towards the great conqueror had in no ways diminished.

For the present the subject lay in abeyance ; but though the Countess had only gained the mortification of a refusal, we shall see that at a later date it is again brought forward.

This being the state of affairs, the news of the Cardinal of York's death in 1807, with whom the Countess had held but little communication ever since the day she had left Rome, only affected her in so far as she lost the pension he had never omitted to pay her notwithstanding his embarrassed circumstances.

The Cardinal in his old age was not spared the ill-fortune that with gruesome persistency pursued his family. Though his life had been passed far from the scenes of political intrigue, and he had never participated in the unsuccessful struggles that had worn out his ancestors, Fate asserted her right to torment him by reducing him to almost absolute want, at an age when he required the comforts to which he had been accustomed all his life.

The complications arising on the invasion of Italy by Napoleon in 1796 did not spare even the rural diocese of Frascati ; and that peaceful suburb shared the agitation felt in Rome by the announcement that the foreign troops were within easy distance of the pontifical city.

The venerable Bishop foresaw a period of storm and stress, and while seeking to tranquillise the anxieties of his flock, he was seriously preoccupied as to future events.

The French Revolution had led to his first losses, as he was in consequence deprived of two rich livings, accruing from the abbeys of Aucline and St. Amand, and of necessity he had to restrict his style of living. The days were over when the villagers with mingled admiration and respect used to see the "Cardinale Duca" gallop by in his coach-and-six, preceded by an outrider, flanked by running footmen, and followed by another coach-and-four.

No more were the carriages to be met flying post-haste to Rome to bring back either the guests, or what was required for the banquets ; luxury was now a thing of the past, and before long even strict economy was insufficient to cover all the outlays.

The loss of a large pension from the Court of Spain also added to the progressive catastrophe leading to the Cardinal's bankruptcy ; but his principal deficit arose out of his generosity towards the Pope, Pius VI., who found himself in a great dilemma as to the possibility of making up the sum of money demanded by Bonaparte in 1796. The Cardinal was so distressed at the Pontiff's inability to comply with the Dictator's commands unaided, that without demur he sold his family jewels, amongst which was a ruby valued at £50,000, and put the profits of the sale at the Pope's disposal.

This noble sacrifice, which relieved the difficulties of the Papal Court, was the culminating stroke to the Cardinal's long-impending ruin ; and when in 1798 he was forced to fly for his life from Frascati, he arrived at Padua, from whence he proceeded to Venice almost destitute.

For a certain time the sale of some plate was sufficient to pay the expenses of his daily needs, but this was only a transitory reprieve from increasing difficulties.

His case became so desperate that Cardinal Borgia at Padua, one of the most noted and influential members of the Sacred College, decided to draw the attention of the English Government to the distressing condition of the last member of the House of Stuart.

Cardinal Borgia concluded that Sir John Hippisley, who was connected with the Stuarts by his first wife, and had shown his friendship for the Cardinal of York during a prolonged visit to Rome, would be the most efficacious intermediary with the Government ; and in a letter written September 14th, 1798, Cardinal Borgia represented the terrible losses the Duke of York had lately incurred owing to the plunder of his house at Frascati as well as that in Rome : he said it pained him to see one of noble birth such as was the Cardinal of York, who had been so generous and charitable to those in need during the days of his prosperity, reduced to such a pass.

No sooner was George III. informed of this sad case than he immediately ordered Lord Minto, at that time Ambassador in Vienna, to contrive means, without hurting the Cardinal's feelings, to offer him a pension of £4,000 a year.

This order was carried out by Lord Minto with the greatest delicacy ; and the Cardinal accepting the gift in the spirit in which it was offered, most gratefully acknowledged the proffered assistance. He wrote a letter to Sir John Hippisley full of feeling and gratitude regarding the King's generosity, and had to admit that without this unexpected aid he could not possibly have existed much longer ; the prospect of languishing in misery and indigence would have been the only one left him. He closed his pathetic letter by expressing the hope that he would see Frascati again before his death, where he would wish to welcome Sir John Hippisley and reassure him of his most sincere esteem and gratitude.¹

Though the Cardinal's wishes were granted, and he returned to Frascati and to the people that he loved, it was nevertheless a sad close to a life that had been dedicated to reducing poverty and misery. The conscientious discharge of the duties of his episcopate had also greatly led to the moral improvement of the people.

While being the least intelligent of his family, he, certainly by his altruistic principles, contributed more

¹ *Memoirs of the Pretenders*, Jesse, vol. ii. p. 160. Bentley, 1845.

to the general good than his relations who had gone before him ; and if he was lacking in brilliancy or great culture, his perspicacity was sufficiently pronounced to enable him to discern and to encourage in others their superiority. No one enjoyed more than he the society of well-read, serious men, whilst it was well recognised amongst them that the Cardinal of York was their most sincere and dependable protector.

This much-loved prelate died at the age of eighty-two, and thus the most unobtrusive of his family passed away. The end of his life is another page to be added to the sad chapters of those who had predeceased him.

It is said that Napoleon, whose star was still high in the heavens, exclaimed when the Cardinal's death was announced to him, "Had the Stuarts but left a boy of eight years old, I should have seated him on the throne of England."¹

To George III. he bequeathed the Crown jewels : they were those that had been carried out of England by his grandfather, James II., in his flight in 1688 ; it is also said that when on his death-bed he specially charged Monsignor Cesarini to send his grandfather's coronation ring to the English monarch.

The Cardinal had constituted Monsignor Cesarini his sole executor, and he, during his lifetime, carefully preserved the valuable documents over which he had entire charge. As before mentioned, a great part of

¹ Atti.



By permission of Monsignor Mercanti.

THE PEDESTAL AND BUST OF THE CARDINAL OF YORK IN THE LIBRARY
AT FRASCATI, FOUNDED BY HIM.



the papers were bequeathed by the Cardinal to the Propaganda in Rome, and on the Monsignor's death the rest of the collection was dispersed and scattered. Some of these letters, sold to the British Museum, have enabled us to gain an insight into details of intimate family matters through the correspondence given in preceding chapters.

Amongst other reasons mentioned in explanation of the state of poverty to which the Cardinal was reduced, it was stated to the British Government, when they were appealed to for help, that he was under an obligation to pay annual pensions of 3,000 crowns to Countess Alberstroff, the mother of his late niece, 1,500 crowns in legacies, left by his father and brother, and 4,000 crowns to his sister-in-law.

The loss of this pension was a serious consideration to the Countess, who found herself thus deprived of an important part of her revenue ; and bearing in mind that Sir John Hippisley had successfully obtained assistance for the Cardinal from the English Government, she thought she could not do better than appeal to him, and at her request Sir John represented her case to the King.

To this appeal Lord Liverpool replied that he was pleased to be able to inform the Countess that His Majesty had ordered an annual sum of £1,600 to be paid her, commencing from the day of the Cardinal of York's death ; the King at the same time expressed regret that, owing to the straitened circumstances in which so many princely families, nearly connected to

his own, found themselves, he could not lay a more substantial sum at the disposal of the Countess.

The tone of the letter seemed to imply that any further request would be unattended to, and the Countess had to accept with a good grace this modest compensation for a heavy loss.

Meanwhile other events, besides money affairs, were gradually evolving, in which she found herself implicated, leading eventually to her call to Paris.

The Emperor was busily engaged in forming the Grand Empire, and had split up Tuscany into three departments ; Florence remained the principal town of the department of the Arno. All the laws promulgated by the House of Lorraine or their predecessors, the Medicis, whether ecclesiastical, civil, or financial, were abolished. Commercial liberty was at an end ; and owing to conscription, the youth of the country were compelled to go forth and shed their blood in Spain, Germany, or Russia. The museums and libraries were despoiled of their richest treasures in order to embellish the galleries in Paris ; and the noted University of Pisa was reduced to a modest Succursale of that of the French capital.

These changes and innovations could not be otherwise than most displeasing to the Tuscans ; nevertheless they were accepted in a spirit of resignation not devoid of sagacity, shown by their willingness to find some good out of the evils that had befallen them.

They did not ignore the benefit attached to the Code Napoleon, and the liquidation of the National

Debt was an immense relief : they recognised that the development of science and art was making rapid strides, and they could not avoid noting that the part taken by the youths in warfare had revived the spirit of military ardour, and consequently of courage, that had lain dormant too long. As regarded the sentiment attached to the conception that they should form part of a great whole, even if not responded to with enthusiasm, still it had a vivifying effect on the people.

Such was the feeling in Florence in 1808, when in June of that year the Emperor issued a mandate calling on Tuscany in forcible terms to form part of his important scheme. He impressed on the Tuscans that he required their assistance to accomplish the glorious future in prospect ; and he appealed to them as his children, to whom he wished to extend all the benefits resulting from his wise and great intentions.

In order to cement the union of the nations as contemplated by Napoleon, he appointed his sister, Eliza Baciocchi, to reside in Florence as head of the general direction of affairs in Tuscany. She had married the Principe di Lucca e di Piombino, but though he was nominally the governor of the three departments of Tuscany, it was she, the Grand Duchess, who virtually governed by her own wise judgment, firm character, and resolute will. No one could have turned to better account the position she had been called on to fill ; and the remembrance of her Court at Palazzo Pitti was long recalled at

Florence as a pleasant episode amongst so many disagreeable events.

On all these innovations the Countess looked askance. Her affection for the House of Bourbon, her recollections of the terrible scenes of the Revolution, and, above all, the influence of Alfieri, not to mention her annoyance on the failure of her financial negotiations, could not do otherwise than strengthen her animosity at every new move taken by the Emperor, by which he asserted his arbitrary will.

She who rarely committed herself, and usually moved with prudence and calm, seemed now to lose all self-control, and acted regardless of consequences.

She foolishly repeated the scene that had occurred with Alfieri and General Miollis, to whom he had refused an interview : she acted precisely in the same way when General Clarke, Napoleon's envoy at the Court of Tuscany, expressed his sincere desire to have the honour of being presented to the widow of Charles Edward, for whom he felt special interest, owing to the old Jacobite traditions of his family.

Her house became the recognised rendezvous for all those most in sympathy with the House of Lorraine, and no diplomacy was used in veiling hostile sentiments towards the Emperor. These facts were not long in reaching Fouché's watchful ears, and he placed the Countess's circle under the special supervision of his well-organised police. Their reports were handed by him to Napoleon, who by the banishment of Mesdames de Stael and Récamier from

France had given tangible proofs of his dislike to women mixing themselves up in politics ; therefore, when in the summer of 1809 the Countess received an order requesting her attendance in Paris, it was only what might be expected, judging from preceding circumstances.

An erroneous impression was current that this order was due to jealousy on the part of the Grand Duchess, who saw a formidable rival in the Countess ; but a few lines from Sobiratz¹ prove, on the contrary, that the Grand Duchess had acted in sympathy with the Countess's wish to avoid the Emperor's decree. In a long letter on various subjects the following passages refer to the case in point :—

“ Calumny no doubt has an interest in holding you in her clutches, as you are her most important prey. It seems to me that the Grand Duchess has done all that could be expected from one so just and correct in her views by offering to be guarantee of your conduct. She has all the qualities necessary to sustain and aggrandise the rank to which fortune has raised her house. No one better than she knows that your position is in no degree less important than that of your ancestors, and in rendering you justice, H.R.H. will honour herself, and where could you be better than under her government ? ”²

In another letter after the Countess's arrival in Paris, Sobiratz wrote :—

¹ Sobiratz was formerly in the service of Spain, and was equally under the surveillance of the French Government. He was one of the Countess's French friends and political correspondents.

² *Portefeuille de la Comtesse d'Albany*, p. 58.

"It is one of the thousand problems left to history to resolve, why your husband was forced to leave Paris, whilst you are compelled to remain there. As you have accepted a pension from England it cannot even be suggested that you could be charged as having taken command of the last expedition,¹ nor have you published manifestos of the collaterals of Prince Charles Edward, for they appear to me to act wisely in renouncing all worldly ambitions."²

The Emperor received the Countess with a courtesy unusual to him. In reference to this circumstance a friend of hers, Madame de Maltzam, who knew all the political and society gossip of the day, wrote to her :—

"I read with great interest the account of your conversation with the Emperor. He certainly was more gallant and amiable with you than with others. I am sure that your self-possession will have pleased him. But I should not be surprised that even after the limit of your exile to Paris, he will want you to live there, as he will doubtless feel you might bring him good fortune, judging from the tone of his conversation with you."³

Fabre, who accompanied the Countess and assisted at the reception, said the Emperor was most courteous.

¹ This is an allusion to the projected descent on England as a retaliation consequent on the well-known Walcheren Expedition, attempted by England whilst Napoleon was occupied at Wagram. It had failed through the able command of Bernadotte and General Clarke, who on this occasion was given the title of Duc de Feltre by Napoleon. The collaterals here alluded to refer to the House of Savoy, who by the death of the Cardinal of York became the representatives of the House of Stuart.

² *Portefeuille de la Comtesse d'Albany*, p. 66.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

He assumed a light tone, and said he was well aware of the important influence she exercised in Florence ; and fearing that this influence might prevent the fusion of the French and Tuscans—a matter he had greatly at heart—for that reason he had requested her presence in Paris, where she would find ample scope for her taste for fine arts.

No attentions were wanting on the part of the Emperor towards a lady of such distinction, and in renewing her old friendship with Madame de Souza and Queen Hortense, who just at this time had abandoned both Holland and her husband, and had come to settle in Paris, the Countess's exile was by no means a penance.

Canova arrived in Paris from Florence, and reported the termination of Alfieri's monument. The Countess wished for further details on a matter of such supreme interest to her, and asked Sismondi's opinion on the work. Sismondi was in regular correspondence with her, and was able to give his impressions on the subject in a few words.

"The last time I passed through Florence I saw and admired the magnificent monument erected by you. To my mind, all is comprised in this work by Canova ; the grandeur and simplicity are both imposing. The figure of Italy is of exceptional beauty, touching and noble ; she is a queen in mourning. Perhaps I may be wrong, but I hold to a certain symmetry in sculpture, still more so when it concerns tombs ; for this reason it appears to me that the colossal figure that covers one side of the

tomb requires a corresponding one the opposite end, such as one sees in those of the Medicis, where the statues of Michael Angelo correspond and beautify the corners of the monument. It is true that in that case they form part of it, whereas this figure to which I refer remains outside as a spectator, and appears to belong less to the tomb than to the crowd who mourn the great man.”¹

Whilst the Countess formed round her a circle—a reminiscence of her salon in Paris of 1788—Fabre occupied himself in the galleries and museums, and increased his already important reputation in the world of art; and thus time passed pleasantly enough till 1810, when the Emperor agreed to the Countess’s request, and she returned to Florence.

After a short tour in the south of Italy, in which was comprised a visit to Rome with the sole scope of becoming conversant with the beauties of the galleries, under the able guidance of Fabre, the Countess returned to her home on the Lung’ Arno in 1812. According to all reports, she had modified her expressions of open defiance towards the Emperor’s policy, whatever may have remained of her personal feelings of disapproval. She formed a closer acquaintanceship with the Grand Duchess, and appeared to admire and respect the tact and intuition displayed by Eliza Baciocchi in fulfilling the duties of her difficult position.

On leaving Paris the Countess had tried to calm

¹ *Lettres inédites de Sismondi*, St. René Taillandier, 1863.

Madame de Souza's fears that she would never see her friend again, and faithfully promised to return to Paris when the day came that she could be there, not under anyone's orders, but for her own pleasure. Ever since the Countess had arrived in Italy Madame de Souza reminded her of her promise, and in several charmingly expressed letters appealed to her friend not to disappoint her. Either the Countess still felt aggrieved at having been forced to inhabit a place against her will, and therefore when once she had left it she did not feel inclined to return, or, finding herself once more in her own surroundings, she settled herself to her books and writing, and consequently postponed the thoughts of a renewed long journey. There is a delightful naïveté in one of the first letters from Madame de Souza to the Countess on the subject she had so much at heart. She relates that she had been told the Emperor had inquired of a mutual friend if the mausoleum to Alfieri in Santa Croce was terminated. On being answered affirmatively, the Emperor was good enough to remark, "We may then hope that we shall soon have Madame d'Albanie here once more." Madame de Souza added that she was sure that her friend would be pleased at this trait of courtesy shown by Napoleon, but the Countess had no reason to trust the Emperor's interest in her plans, and did not respond to his amiable remark as Madame de Souza would have wished.¹

Madame de Souza, in despair of enticing the Coun-

¹ *Le portefeuille de la Comtesse d'Albanie*, p. 106.

tess, though she offered to put a large apartment at her disposal and a studio for M. Fabre's use as well, turned to him to assist her in persuading her obdurate friend to make a start, and said—

“M. Fabre, to you I appeal to take the decision. We are all waiting to see ‘cette bonne Madame d'Albanie’; we never speak of her without adding ‘cette bonne’—it is a term expressive of all we feel for her in our hearts. I beg you to bring her back to us: we will take such care of both you and her, not only because you will have brought her to us, but also because we esteem you; and you will have given me the greatest pleasure in the world.”

But the letter to M. Fabre did not advance any decision, and there were still no reassuring signs of the Countess's departure for Paris, though she occasionally raised Madame de Souza's hopes that she would arrive one day at the time of year when the little rose garden would be in flower, in which her friend took great pride, and wished her to see it in all its beauty.

Madame de Souza became impatient at these continual postponements, and begged M. Fabre at least to give her the pleasure of painting a portrait of the Countess by which “that charming face, expressive of so much goodness, would be handed down to posterity”; she entreated him to pay no attention to the Countess's expostulations on her age, as every age has its own special charm, and begged him to immortalise himself by the portrait of “that good, excellent friend” whom they all loved so dearly. Two

months later M. Fabre received another letter referring to the picture ; and Madame de Souza anxiously inquired—

“ Have you commenced the portrait of our friend ? and how is it composed ? Give her that expression of goodness we all know, and do not let her get lost in reveries, as then she puts on that far-away look I do not wish her to have. Speak to her of her friends, of all of us, and let me have a portrait of her as she looks when she says, ‘ Bonjour, ma chère.’ ”

In October, 1812, the long-wished-for likeness of the Countess was sent to Paris, and Madame de Souza wrote in enthusiastic terms :—

“ My good, my dear friend, I have received your portrait, and it is hard for me to describe my gratitude and pleasure. Everyone thinks it charming. Perhaps they think my dear friend too serious, but they add, ‘ It is her own fault,’ and they all admire M. Fabre’s work and the way he has treated the subject. Your portrait will be always close to my chair, and will never leave me, my good, my best friend.”¹

Madame de Souza had to content herself with the portrait, and renounced all hopes of seeing the Countess for the present. Many years passed before the Countess returned to Paris, but the unbroken correspondence between the two friends prevented the severing of ties, save for one brief moment, owing to a difference on politics, and when they met again the long parting was forgotten in the renewal of the friendship of former years.

¹ *Le portefeuille de la Comtesse d’Albanie*, p. 143.

CHAPTER X

FOSCOLO AND SISMONDI

Summary of Foscolo's character—His restless nature—Friendship with Silvio Pellico—His acquaintance with the Countess—She condemns his conduct—He abandons Italy—Letters from the Countess on the subject—Quirina's jealousy—Foscolo goes to England—His death—Political letters between the Countess and Sismondi—She censures his adhesion to the Emperor's cause—Sismondi tries to convert her to his views—Their friendship ceases.

OF recent years the name of Foscolo has absorbed a large share of public interest ; and, as is often the case when fashion directs attention to the study of a character that has hitherto been considered of too small importance to analyse, one work follows another in bewildering succession on the subject in vogue, thereby making it hard for the student to steer a middle course between the partiality of the writers and the authenticity of facts.

The task of arriving at a just summary of Foscolo's character has been one of unusual difficulty ; and after having read, and thought hard over the published works, the conclusion arrived at would tend to confirm the opinion that he was in some sense a disappointment. All the materials were to hand for producing a fine work, but the architect failed at the

critical moment and prejudiced the whole fabric by his neglect of detail and omitting of the true artist's temperament.

His correspondence is voluminous ; but, though well worth perusal, we limit ourselves to mentioning the most recent publications,¹ without enlarging on the subject ; being only concerned with the letters that passed between Countess d'Albanie and himself.

A very complete collection of those she addressed to him were published in 1887 by C. Antona-Traversi,² with a long preface relating to the Countess and her connection with the impulsive poet.

We find it hard to accept all A. Traversi's criticisms, and more especially his definition of her as "an apathetic, cold, egotistic, indifferent woman, who led a frivolous life in which intellect played but a small part"; and in order not to attach undue importance to these scathing remarks, we must endeavour to render our readers conversant with the facts relating to Foscolo himself and those regarding his acquaintance with Countess d'Albanie.

The son of a Venetian, who died when he was a mere boy, Ugo Foscolo was born in Zante in 1776. He went through his course of studies at Padua, on the conclusion of which he joined his mother, a Greek by birth, in Venice.

¹ *Lettere di Ugo Foscolo a Sigismondo Trecchi.* Lacroix. Paris, 1875. *Lettere inedite a Silvio Pellico.* Roma, 1886. *Lettere inedite a Isabella Teotechi Albrizzi,* Roma, 1902.

² *Lettere inedite di Luigia Stolberg Contessa d'Albany a Ugo Foscolo.* C. Antona-Traversi, Roma, 1887.

When Venice was made over to Austria he retired to Pavia, and from there he went to Milan to seek employment in the new capital of the improvised Republic. Thus from the days of his boyhood Foscolo was witness of scenes which inflamed his easily agitated brain ; and in 1802, when the Cisalpine was transformed into an Italian Republic with Napoleon as President of it, he gave the first proofs of his turbulent nature by pronouncing a violent discourse against France ; the bad taste of which was all the more to be condemned because he had served under Napoleon in 1799, when the Emperor claimed the services of the Italian army in view of a projected expedition against England. This speech could only be condoned by treating it as the effusion of an irresponsible youth, and, even if it came to his ears, it left the Emperor undisturbed.

The next years of Foscolo's life were passed in a desultory if not entirely unprofitable way. At the University of Pavia he had been named Professor of eloquence, and the lectures he delivered on languages, literature, and æsthetics gave proof of the capacity for serious work that lay beneath the impulsive nature of the teacher.

Foscolo's complex character was best understood and defined by Silvio Pellico, the author of *Le Mie Prigioni*, that well-known work in which he relates with touching simplicity the sufferings of his fifteen years of prison life. S. Pellico began by being so infatuated with the capabilities of Foscolo's nature,

that for many years he classified him as the greatest man of his time ; this opinion was somewhat modified at a later date, and at the age of sixty-five Pellico excused his exaggerated opinion of Foscolo's powers as the result of his own overweening pride in his youth ; and when he looked back on the value he set on his own judgment at the age of twenty, he was ashamed at his want of common sense in thus having overrated his friend's talents.

But if Pellico had been carried away in his youth by an exaggerated admiration of Foscolo's qualities, he still, on maturer thought, found much interest in the strange contradictions of the young poet's character ; and his friendship for him remained unimpaired to the end of his life.

Pellico was living at Lyons when he read Foscolo's remarkable poem, "I sepolcri": it moved and agitated him considerably, and aroused in him the wish to know the poet who had thus stirred his admiration. This wish was not accomplished till two years later, on the recall of Pellico to Italy in 1809, when his services were required in the army : this gave him the opportunity of making Foscolo's acquaintance at Milan.

Their friendship led to many letters passing between them ; they form part of the numerous collection of Foscolo's voluminous correspondence ; and we owe them to his restless, chequered life and his constantly changing habitation, the result of his unmethedical style of living. This was the reason also that he was

constantly without a penny in his pocket ; and no doubt the perpetual misery and poverty which was his lot to the end of his days contributed to develop the morbid characteristics that prevail in his books.

The best known of his works, *Jacopo Ortis*, was responsible for the disastrous end of a young man, Odoardo Briche, whose father had an employment under the Minister of the French Republic, in Venice. Pellico was tutor to the boy at the time that the tragedy occurred : he refers to it in *Le Mie Prigioni*, and relates that on the report of a gun, he went to the youth's room, and found him lying on the floor with the book *Jacopo Ortis* open by his side. This book was judged by a literary critic as "the work of a genius written in an access of malignant fever."

Books such as these followed as a sequel to the religious scepticism of Goethe's *Werther*, and the absolute deism of J. J. Rousseau, and wrought havoc on susceptible natures. No one more than Foscolo himself recognised the fatal results of his work ; and in a preface to a later edition he asserted that were it possible he would willingly destroy the book : the only excuse he could offer for having presented it to the public was his ignorance at the age when he wrote it that the condoning of suicide would lead the youth of the day to follow the example of the hero of the book. He was the first to admit the crime of insisting on the difficulties of life to those who were just setting out to follow their calling : on the contrary,

these required all the hope and encouragement that their fellow-men could bestow on them.

These few remarks on Foscolo enable us to form some idea of his character, which though an interesting study to outsiders, might easily have become tedious to those who, while appreciating his good points, could not avoid being wearied by his restlessness.

It was soon after the Countess's return to Florence that Ugo Foscolo became one of her most assiduous attendants. Perhaps the similarity he bore to Alfieri may have fostered the attraction of which she was conscious in this strange man. If not strictly speaking good-looking, his manner was certainly sympathetic ; whilst his expressive eyes, clear-cut features, high forehead off which he brushed his red hair, produced no doubt a sufficient likeness to Alfieri, and reminded her forcibly of her friend. In temperament and moods he bore a still more striking resemblance ; he was governed by the same love of liberty and independence, but, on the other hand, he lacked the indomitable will of the tragedian, and though he surpassed him in deeper inspiration and superior culture, his freaks and fancies constantly invalidated the results of his intensely poetic nature.

These very points of similarity to Alfieri, whilst at first they attracted Foscolo to the Countess's notice, as their acquaintance advanced produced a sentiment of irritation that such a resemblance should be possible ; and this feeling became stronger as she

found how far they were apart in their views on the serious questions of life.

At times, on seeing Foscolo and hearing him speak, she would lean back in her chair and think of days gone by with Alfieri, and whilst Foscolo, full of his absorbing ambitions, rambled on with unbroken volubility, the Countess turning her head to the Arno and the hills studded with grey olive groves beyond, would become lost in a dreamy meditation of the past. She would be suddenly roused by some startling paradox launched at hazard by Foscolo, and never more than at those moments when for a few minutes he had brought Alfieri "back from the grave once more," did Foscolo appear at a greater disadvantage to Alfieri's muse.

His first impressions of the Countess were most favourable. He wrote to Comtesse Isabella Albrizzi, to whom he owed the introduction, that she had found him rooms near her house, and had put her library entirely at his disposal ; and, what he valued still more highly, she had made him a present of Alfieri's tragedies with the poet's notes on the margin. His evenings, he said, "I pass with Alfieri's friend, because she is my neighbour. In her house there is a perpetual coming and going of women, some good-looking, others plain, and nearly all past middle age. I listen to what they have to say, in silence, and in that way they go away contented and pleased at having been allowed to talk without interruption."

It was in consequence of Foscolo's decision to

abandon Tuscany and return to Milan, in 1813, that the first differences arose between him and the Countess—differences which finally led to a rupture.

Great changes were again occupying the attention of the whole of Europe ; and after the defeat of the French by the allied armies at Leipzig, the agitation and the uncertainty as to what might follow became intense in the north of Italy.

Foscolo, fired with the thought that he might take part in some way or other at duty's call, without hesitation considered it right that he should return to Milan, the city to which he felt bound, and he wrote to the Countess, "It is impossible to be cosmopolitan, and he who is not a citizen of any particular town is much to be pitied."

The Countess, with her quick intuition, had perceived, after a very short acquaintance with Foscolo, that in all his actions he was mainly guided by inordinate vanity and an intense love of notoriety. These traits were plainly visible by his inconsistency in following up any line of conduct, and by his disorganised life : his interest in anything he undertook only lasted as long as it attracted the notice of others.

For this reason, whilst recognising Foscolo's undeniable abilities, the Countess had never felt she could take him seriously ; and she could not avoid treating him with a certain condescension not entirely free from a tendency to maternal advice. On this occasion she felt great irritation that he should consider himself of such importance as to imagine

that his presence in Milan was of any consequence, and could not resist reproving him for his capricious nature: she found fault with his morbid susceptibilities, and adopting a patronising tone, advised him to keep to literature, by which he might hope for greater fame than in attempting to conquer the world ; " You seek the glory of the moment," she added, " and you lose too much time with women ; when one wishes to work seriously, love should be only a pastime."¹

The following letters again refer to this last subject ; the Countess having had reason to notice that Foscolo was as fickle and undependable in his attachments as in more serious pursuits.

" You treat love as might be expected from a writer of tragedy, that is to say, like one whose affections are undecided, and who prefers to be a butterfly. I am quite of the opinion of the first of your flames here, you are a far better friend than lover. . . . Here in Florence you have been most unfaithful to her you say you love. Had you been dominated by a great passion you would not have been so eager for fresh conquests."

After many letters in the same strain of disapproval regarding Foscolo's tenure of conduct, the Countess expresses her own personal regrets at his absence.

" I am charmed to have known you, and I regret daily the loss of your society, even though I see so

¹ *Lettere inedite della Contessa d'Albany a Ugo Foscolo.* Antonina Traversi, p. 76.

many other people . . . I regret not seeing you ; I began to be accustomed to your agreeable and instructive conversation, which cannot easily be replaced. . . . I am delighted when I can remain alone in the evening, as Florentine society bores me ; I regret you with all my heart and I execrate the circumstances that took you away.”¹

But political events were too exciting after Napoleon’s exile to Elba for the Countess to lose time or thoughts either on Foscolo’s love affairs, or on his absence as far as it concerned her personally. Her exasperation at the line he had adopted remained just as great, but that was due to the presumption and self-importance she considered he showed in his letters : she felt she was a better authority than he on political affairs, and in the following extracts from her letters, written in 1814, she resumes the domineering tone that was particularly irritating, but in which she enables us to form an idea of the prevailing anxiety in Florence at that time. Her first letter would seem to indicate that she still attracted suspicion, and that her letters were occasionally intercepted :—

“I see, my dear Ugo, by the letter you addressed to M. Fabre, that you wrote to me from Turin. I have never received that letter, though I cannot see why it should amuse anyone to interrupt our correspondence, as it can interest no one. Yesterday the Neapolitans arrived,² and the Grand Duchess Eliza left ; the other authorities are still here, as well as the garrison. May Heaven give us peace : we

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

² Murat’s troops.

certainly require it. As regards yourself, I advise you to let your ardour cool. It is useless to worry oneself for others ; so few people are worth any sacrifice, above all the multitude, and we are all one of the mass. . . . I am charmed that your health is better ; take care of yourself when it is cold : we have felt the winter more these last two days (18 February) than any other year. I wish the ice could cool your volcanic imagination ; it seems to me since you left, it is always in a state of eruption. You ought to have a reasonable person near you who would put you in the road of common sense by which you would see things as they are, and not poetically."

The following letter is full of sarcastic remarks on the Emperor, and she again recommends prudence to Foscolo :—

"7 May, 1814.

“Admit that Napoleon has verified my prediction, which was that he would not accept death. I cannot conceive how he can live hated and despised by everyone. What will he do in his island ? The past, present, and future must weigh him down. Tell me if it is true that you were on the point of taking the fatal leap and mixing yourself up with the disorderly mob on 14th April ? The island of Elba is too close to Tuscany, because after a time our neighbour will not keep quiet ; it is true that he has lost credit, but all is so soon forgotten, and only few have good memories. It will not be the first time that those such as he have renewed their attempts.”

In her next letter, of 28th May, the request of Sismondi to favour him with Foscolo's address affords

her a reason to speak of him as contemptuously as of Foscolo himself. In former days the Countess had had many links in common with the historian, but so consistent was she in her hatred of Napoleon, that rather than deny her profound convictions, she neither hesitated to lose her friends, nor on this point did she ever make a step towards a compromise. She therefore remarks on Sismondi :—

“ He has asked for your address, as he will probably pass through Milan ; I have not been able to give it him. He is also one of those men who does not know what he wants ; he deplores everything, even the honour of the French, which certainly has suffered terribly, for without the help of strangers they never would have been free of our neighbour (Napoleon). Tuscany is quiet, and only waits for her Grand Duke (Ferdinand).” And again, “ M. Sismondi, who considers himself French for the sole reason that he writes and speaks the language, is one of those who would have preferred the continuation of the tyrant’s reign sooner than to have been chased by the coalition. This inspires pity. One only hears false views on every side.”

This tone of banter in the Countess’s letters, and of excitable self-defence in those of Foscolo, increased as they became more obstinate in their views ; and while her irritation was more marked as she saw that he scorned her advice, he on his side, on receiving her long admonitions, only adhered with greater tenacity to his own opinions.

Napoleon’s escape from Elba in 1815 furnished an excuse for a serious breach between them.

The fear of a renewed upheaval all over Europe in consequence of this grave news decided Austria to demand the support of the Italian troops. Foscolo was still in the army, and had even been offered by Austria the charge of a battalion. No doubts were entertained as to his loyalty on this occasion, and he gave every reason to suppose that he was ready to be sworn in. When therefore it was known he had left Milan secretly and had gone to Switzerland, great displeasure was expressed at his mean conduct. The explanation he wrote to his family of the circumstances did not suffice to dissipate the disagreeable impression felt by his action. He spoke of his honour and conscience, and of his decision never to sell himself to any government. Italy only would he serve, and never could he allow it to be said that he was a partisan of France, Germany, or any other nation : he preferred exile to such an alternative, and would leave himself in the hands of chance.

To no one was this step taken by Foscolo, more distasteful than to the Countess, and in a few cutting words she conveys to him her contempt for his conduct :—

“ 13 August, 1815.

“ DEAR SIR,—I have received your letter. I was told that you had been in Paris and on to England. If you had acted like everyone else, you would have remained quietly at Milan, and no one would have thought of you more than of others ; still more, as I am told that the matter of taking the oath was not obligatory. It suited you to go off to the mountains,

and if it amused you it is best so. As to the discourses on Italy you have recently published, you have not taught the public anything new ; there is nothing left to say on the subject. For my part I hope to live quietly ; no one will make me leave my home unless it suits me ; everything else is a matter of indifference. I advise everyone to settle down with the least possible discomfort, and you especially. If surrounded with your mountains you ever see a paper, you will read that M. Sismondi has written in favour of the one who fell vilely (Napoleon), but the conduct of the latter does not astonish me more than that of his brother-in-law (Murat). Only maniacs, or interested people, count on these semi-great men. I am told that you are in sympathy with them, but it is also said that you are changeable ; in that respect you are only like many others, however much you strive after originality. I cannot conceal that I do not approve of your conduct. Perhaps if I heard your reasons, I might modify my opinion ; in the meantime accept the assurance of my interest, as well as that of the painter (M. Fabre). I did not wish to answer your first letter, and for very good reasons : everyone was being watched, and as you had disappeared in that strange way, I preferred having no communication with you. Keep well ; enjoy the cold scenery of Switzerland, and satisfy your imagination, which may lead you to write good verses, but will never lead to your happiness. As far as that goes happiness is relative, each finds it as it suits him best."

This answer from the Countess fell like a cold-water douche on Foscolo's visions of having performed an heroic act, and the sarcastic tone running

through the letter was most offensive to the poet's susceptibilities. He was so blinded by self-importance that it had never occurred to him he was acting dishonourably in stealing away from his companions under arms at a most critical moment. He still made an effort to explain to the Countess the motives that had led to his decision, and remarked that though he might hate the tyranny of Napoleon, it did not necessarily imply he should prefer to be governed by the House of Austria.

This attempt to judge matters from his point of view did not persuade the Countess ; for a long time the correspondence ceased, and restraint took the place of the former feeling of cordiality that had brought them together.

There were other reasons, however, apart from politics that were tending to widen the rift between the Countess and Foscolo ; and the person who was the most interested in a desire to effect that result was the last to be suspected of mean designs ; for the mischief-maker was Quirina, Térèsa Mocenni's daughter, the staunch Sienese friend of the Countess, whose death had occurred just at the time of her daughter's marriage.

The key to the situation lies in the fact that Quirina was Foscolo's *donna gentile*, and had managed to obtain a more lasting hold over his fickle affections than the many other women who had but momentarily attracted his attentions.

From what we gather in the Countess's letters to

Quirina, it does not appear that she had ever known her personally ; but the girl was well aware of the Countess's power of attracting men, and dreaded it, notwithstanding that she still stood on the threshold of life, whilst the Countess was well through the portals.

In the exuberance of his spirits during the early days of Foscolo's acquaintance with the Countess he had no doubt roused Quirina's jealousy by his exaggerated enthusiasm over Countess d'Albanie's qualities ; and though there were many younger women from whose fascinations Quirina might fear dire results, she saw in the Countess a formidable rival whose nets were always spread to trip up the unwary. We shall see by-and-by how Quirina acted on these malevolent sentiments. In the meantime she had married a Signor Magiotti, but all the same her attachment for Foscolo remained unchanged.

We give the following letters, written by the Countess relative to her marriage and her mother's death, purposely to show how unfounded Quirina's suspicions were. The first letter runs as follows :—

“I am more happy than I can say, dear child of my truest friend, to know that you are happy, and that I was able to contribute to your happiness. I have no doubt that your father-in-law, the estimable Captain, will do all he can to make you so : give him my remembrances, and tell him that I think of him with affection, and esteem him with all my heart ; never would I have wished for a better father-in-law

than he. How glad I should have been could our unhappy friend have witnessed the fate she has brought you, because you owe it to that excellent mother and friend, for whom I shall sorrow all my life. I wrote a long letter to Vittorio ;¹ he answered me and made many excuses. I hope that boy will not lose himself ; he has a good heart, but our dear Térèsa spoilt him, and he is very vain. I fear he will be very unhappy alone with his father, whom he neither esteems nor loves. How fortunate you are, my dear Quirina, to have left your home and to be so well settled, which in some degree diminishes the loss you have suffered. I recommend my god-child to you ; pray attend to her education. I am impatiently waiting the moment to make your acquaintance, and to embrace the daughter of my dear friend, my dear Térèsa. Never, never shall I forget her ; she will always live in my heart. I cannot get used to the thought that I shall never see her again, and I had so hoped that your marriage would unite us all the more ! Keep her virtues always in your mind, and imitate her perfect conduct. Give me news of yourself and your husband, also of your father-in-law, and tell me the life you lead. Do you occupy yourself ? Do you read ? Tell me if you know French, and if you take an interest in literature. I cannot hope to see you before the end of November. I regret it very much, but you are right to conform yourself to your father-in-law's wishes. Good-bye, dear Quirina ; think of me as your second mother. Farewell, dear child, be happy, and always remember our Térèsa."

¹ The youth previously mentioned in letters to Térèsa, in whom the Countess was specially interested, as being Alfieri's godchild.

This letter, as well as the next, was addressed to Signora Quirina Magiotti a Montevarchi.

"How I regret, my dear Quirina, to hear of the illness of the estimable Captain! I am sincerely grieved and anxious, and shall hope for speedy news; write to me, I beg you, by the first courier. I know that you are contented and happy, and I hope it will always be thus, and that your prudence will ensure you the continuity of good luck. In this world there is no rose without a thorn, so you also will have your troubles, but at least you have a large share of good fortune. This is the day I expected you, and I was looking forward to a real pleasure, and the reason that has forced you to postpone your visit makes me regret it all the more. I am sure you will give as much care to your father-in-law as you did to our dear and unhappy friend of whom I cannot think without tears. Never, never again shall I find such a friend; I trust you will find in me the same friendship, if you will only love me, as her faithful friend. Of Vittorio I have heard nothing further; I much fear that his vanity prevents him seeing that I tell him the truth. Good-bye, with a hearty kiss. I feel I already love you as the child of my dearest Térèsa."

The following letter is to Quirina's father-in-law, to whom the Countess participates her sympathy on the loss the bride has incurred on her mother's death :—

"May I beg you, my dear Captain, to remit the enclosed letter to Quirina, whom I hear you are going to see to-morrow? I am surprised she did not leave sooner, for it is terrible for her to remain in the

house where her mother died. I cannot express to you my grief ! Quirina is most fortunate to find in you a father, friend, and protector. Keep well, and always count on the consideration I bear you." (Louise de Stolberg, Countess d'Albany, addressed to "Al Signor Capitano Magiotti.")¹

In these three letters, selected from an inedited collection, nothing can be urged in excuse for Quirina's hostile sentiments towards her mother's friend. At the very time she accepted the Countess's sympathy for her mother's death, and responded to the interest taken in her own welfare, she warned Foscolo against "the malicious woman without heart," and added many other opprobrious terms, though, as these letters show, she was not yet personally acquainted with the woman she maligned.

Foscolo replied to Quirina's warning as far back as the year 1814 :—

"For a long time past the Countess has not deceived me with her letters of maternal advice. Though I continued to make believe that I had observed nothing, I have learnt that she is neither just nor loyal towards her friends ; but you have done well to warn me, it is always best to know with what sort of people one has to deal ; in this case I shall have no remorse of having suspected unjustly."

It is hard to believe that those words came from a man who was receiving financial help from the Countess, and was in active correspondence with her ;

¹ *Lettere inedite R. Biblioteca Marucelliana. Firenze.*

O'au ayer sha cheve Quinina ave ben
On explais la maladie de notre main que
je avoiai quini, voulut m'en Denuz Des navelles
j'i m'y intisse pour vous, et pour faire jene
on que j'i van que De timoign le pret que
J'y prende bon soinement. Ayer doni De
vans et Compte a jamais sur ma tisane
amitie'. De vous ambrisse De hant mon
coeur

Souine De Holling C
D'abord

ce denuci'g que a g hours

but such being the case, the political differences of opinion which led to the severance of the Countess and Foscolo must be considered, as far as she was concerned, a fortunate occurrence.

When Foscolo left Italy in 1815 never to return, he did his best to persuade Pellico to link his destinies with his, but, finding his entreaties of no avail, he confided to his friend the task of burning many of his books, with the reservation of those he wished forwarded to him. He begged Pellico to force open an old chest, in which he would find an unfinished tragedy and many letters from Countess d'Albanie ; these letters he requested Pellico to keep. He seemed to have a presentiment that he and Silvio would never meet again, because, while accepting his friend's decision not to abandon his parents and to remain in Italy, he implored him in the same letter not to forget him, even after hearing of his death.

In 1817 Foscolo settled in Kensington. In those days it was still country, and he considered it less expensive than being in London itself. He was appreciative of the English up to a certain point, and spoke of their sincerity and loyalty in friendship ; but he considered that much amalgamation of interests would be difficult owing to the unexpansive English nature.

Many of his letters to Isabella Albrizzi were written from London, and we find that he had the audacity to write to the Countess letters of recommendation for Lady Bury and the diplomat Sir Robert

Adair, who intended to visit Florence. The Countess, quite unaware of Foscolo's defamation of her character, received them with her usual grace, and bade them all the more welcome on account of his introduction, for though their political divergencies had separated them, she had never for a moment doubted his loyalty.

Always in a state verging on bankruptcy, he had left Kensington and had taken a cottage at Turnham Green, where his expenses were small ; and though it was a humble abode, yet he felt, as he expressed it, he could "at least die in it like a gentleman." Feeling his health failing fast, he testified his wish to be buried under a tree in the fresh and open churchyard at Chiswick.

He died 1827, in his forty-ninth year. The stone still stands to commemorate where Foscolo was buried, but for more than thirty years the weeping willow has no longer drooped over the poet's grave. Italy claimed him, for, notwithstanding all his errors of judgment and failings, the love of his country was the principal objective of all his actions ; and mistaken though he often was in his mode of procedure, his patriotic enthusiasm cannot be discussed.

In Santa Croce a monument is in course of erection to his memory, but the work was not completed up to the time of writing.

Without wishing to minimise the ingratitude displayed by Foscolo towards his benefactress, it must, on the other hand, be admitted that the scornful and

bitter terms in which the Countess addressed herself to all those who, while equally bemoaning the state of political affairs, felt that no amount of vituperations would alter facts, and it were best, therefore, to temporise, led in many cases to the snapping of the fragile links by which friendship is held together ; and though on most occasions she swayed the decisions of her vassals, when the question turned on politics they wavered in their allegiance.

Sismondi was too important a personage to escape her observations, and the Countess considered that their acquaintance, which dated from 1804, gave her a right to criticise the tendency to leniency she noticed gradually taking the place of his former aggressive mood.

Their acquaintance was first formed during Sismondi's travels in Italy with Madame de Staël ; and in 1807 he recalled himself to the Countess's mind by sending her the first two volumes of his *History of the Republics*, accompanied by the following words :—

“ Were your noble friend alive, it is to him that I would have wished to present these volumes ; to have obtained his suffrage above that of all others, would have been my ambition. He belonged to that era of greatness and grandeur that I have tried to describe. No one represented more than he did an age that is past ; and in him Italy had a memorial of what her sons had been, and a type of what they might still become. It seems to me that Alfieri's friend, who consecrates her life to the worship of this

great man's memory, will look with favour on a work from one of his most devoted admirers. In this production she will find many of the thoughts and sentiments dwelt on by Alfieri with so much knowledge and eloquence."¹

This letter was written from Pescia, where Sismondi's family had settled after all their property near Geneva had been confiscated during the revolution; but when he had spent some months in Tuscany, Sismondi was seized with a longing to see his native country again, and returned to Geneva. This led to his intimate friendship with Madame de Staël at Coppet, and accounts for the constant recurrence of her name in his letters to the Countess.

In 1813 Sismondi went to Paris, where, thanks to the letters of recommendation from both these ladies, he found no difficulty in penetrating such as remained of the old aristocratic society still jealous of its old traditions; he saw besides the best liberal society evolved out of the events of '89.

Whilst he was there he often met the Countess's charming friend, Madame de Souza, who wrote to her: "I like your Sismondi very much; notwithstanding his deep knowledge and learning, he remains so simple and unaffected; he even took interest in my garden, and admired my roses as we strolled there together."

This prolonged residence of Sismondi in Paris worked a great change in his proclivities. No one

¹ *Lettres intédites de Sismondi*, St. René Taillandier, p. 67.

had stronger reasons than he to execrate the revolution : both he and his father had been thrown into prison, and his family were living destitute and in exile owing to its consequences : but by degrees Sismondi lost the aristocratic sentiments inherent to the old traditions of his family, and became one of the new race. He looked upon France as the country destined to work a beneficial effect on the modern world ; and during the campaign of 1813 he lived in a fever of alternate hopes and fears, lest the mission of giving liberty combined with civilisation to other countries should be denied her. His whole being seemed bound up in the destinies of the French nation, and each victory or defeat became a source of personal joy or humiliation to him. This generosity towards a country that had formerly stirred up his animosity led to his being French once more after the disasters of 1814.

Madame de Staël shared Sismondi's sentiments ; but the Countess stood aloof, and betrayed no signs of commiseration at the misery and unhappiness pervading a country where she had been so well received. It was in vain that Sismondi tried to convert her, and brought before her consideration the advisability of adapting her views to the actual state of affairs. He wrote strongly to her on this subject in December, 1814 :—

“ I am astonished to find that you continue to dwell on the past, when it is only with the present that we are concerned. When great actors leave the

stage and throw off their costumes, it seems to me that all the passions they roused, cease ; they become ordinary mortals once more, they are no longer criticised as heroes of tragedy, and the performance is only judged in reference to art. Women, however, are generally carried away by personal impressions, and there is always a certain amount of passion in their politics. Think it over, madame, and see if your hatred is not as far removed from true philosophy as the enthusiasm of Lady Holland.”¹

The last paragraph refers to Lady Holland’s undisguised sympathy for the fallen Emperor. This was the incident that almost led to a rupture between the Countess and Madame de Souza, whom she accused of being influenced by Lady Holland’s expressions of sorrow on the decline of Napoleon’s fortune. It required Madame de Souza’s real affection for her friend, and her wonderful amiability of character to accept the Countess’s interference in her affairs, and to let this incident pass.

It was on May 3rd, 1815, that the well-known interview between the Emperor and Sismondi took place ; and as they paced the shady avenues of the Elysée Gardens together, Sismondi, fascinated by the marvellous union of all that constituted greatness in Napoleon, no longer halted between two opinions ; and, without ostentation or wish to make himself remarkable, became a sincere convert to his views.

The day following the audience the Emperor sent him the Legion of Honour with these words : “ Did

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

I know of any other mark of esteem that would be agreeable to M. Sismondi, I would willingly offer it him."

It is very easy to imagine the impression created among the Imperialists, when Sismondi's avowed adhesion to their cause was known. This was the decisive step to which the Countess had referred in her letter to Foscolo in Switzerland, condemning both her friends at the same time. She hesitated whether she should write to Sismondi or not ; eventually she could not resist the temptation of conveying to him her feelings of disapproval ; and in a tone of irony she reproached him for showing inexperience and prolonged youthfulness in his judgments, which led him to be too great an optimist, and therefore he judged men as being better than they are.

Sismondi answered her in a few well-chosen words, and endeavoured to put before her a more correct view of the case.

"Our dissentment arises through your attachment to persons, and I, to principles ; we each remain faithful to our original sympathies or antipathies—I to things, and you to people. I do not waver in my worship for liberal tendencies, for civil and religious liberty, and I have not changed in my disdain and hatred of intolerance, the doctrine of passive obedience, and all servile ideas. You, madame, preserve your original sentiments for persons, whatever their situation ; those you have pitied and revered in sorrow, you equally love in prosperity ;

those you execrated when they were tyrannical, inspire your hatred when they have fallen. If we compare our two modes of fidelity, one to principles, the other to people, permit me to remark, notwithstanding all you may say to the contrary, that yours shows far more passion and youthfulness than mine, and that though you have made efforts to calm yourself, by the study of philosophy and long retreats in solitude, you still have a younger heart and more ardent feelings than I, whom you accuse of too much youth.”¹

The correspondence between the Countess and Sismondi temporarily ceased, and was only opened the following year by the historian, who, conscious that he had not committed any fault that required justification, wrote to the Countess from Pisa, 16th February 1816 :—

“I wish to offer for your acceptance, madame, three volumes of my *Histoire des Républiques Italiennes* as a peace-offering. I knew that you would severely blame what I thought and wrote to you some time since. Our judgment on certain characters of note does not agree; probably our opinions on actual results are also different, but I hoped we should have shared the same views on general ideas. I shall before long be in Florence, and shall then hope to see you; may I also hope you will be as good to me as hitherto? Surely your philosophical mind must make it clear that there are two ways of judging and feeling, whereby one person holds to the vividness of past impressions, and the other to the vivacity of the present. You are too liberal-minded and charitable to be intolerant of opinions not agreeing with your own.”

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 270.

The lucid explanations given by Sismondi as to his aims and views, expressed with such simplicity and absence of wishing to find fault, might have influenced anyone save the Countess, and led her to less biased conclusions ; but with advancing years she had lost much of her former elasticity of mind, and refused to be convinced, even by those she recognised as authorities, in the disputes she initiated. The tenacity which in her youth was a good quality, now drifted into obstinacy ; she closed her ears to all reasonable arguments, and lost friends rather than concede a single point. The correspondence with Sismondi was never entirely broken off, but the friendship had been strained, and the interest had waned after ineffectual attempts of each to convert the other to his or her views ; therefore, imperceptibly, formal notes, principally referring to mutual friends coming to Italy, took the place of the former friendly and agreeable correspondence, and finally it ended altogether.

CHAPTER XI

SUNSET

Return of the Grand Duke to Florence—Opinions of Chateaubriand and Lamartine on the Countess—An evening in Casa Alfieri—Letters from Madame de Souza—Fabre paints a portrait of the Countess—She again appeals for her pension from France—The assistance of Madame de Staël—No result is obtained—The Countess and Fabre go to Paris—The return to Montpellier—New visitors in Florence—Increased correspondence—The Countess's daily routine—Her methodical habits—Her literary work—Receptions at her house—The decline of her health—Gustave's preoccupations—The Countess's tenacity for work—Her preparations for death—Her last days—Gloom of Florence on her death—Recognition of her great qualities—Eulogy by the Grand Duke—Her legacies—Fabre constituted sole heir—His indifference at her death—He transports all the papers to Montpellier—The Musée Fabre—The Countess interred at Santa Croce—The two brothers Stuart—Their disputed legitimacy.

THE 17th September, 1814, was long registered in the annals of Florentine history as a red-letter day, for on that day most of the population thronged the streets of Florence leading to the Porta San Gallo, to welcome the return of the Grand Duke Ferdinand, who in 1799 had been compelled to abandon first Tuscany and then Italy.

As he entered the gate the Gonfaloniere, or Chief Magistrate, presented him with the keys of the town, and in a voice trembling with emotion expressed the heartfelt thanks of the citizens that the Grand Duke was in their midst once more.

To no one had the re-established order of things been more satisfactory than to the Countess, and while she rendered justice to the Grand Duchess Eliza's judicious administration of affairs, on the day that the Grand Duke was again installed at Palazzo Pitti she felt that Florence was relieved from a great oppression, and considered his arrival as a harbinger of brighter days.

The fine apartments of the Ducal Palace were once more thrown open to guests who were eager to celebrate the home-coming of the popular governor. Brilliant fêtes were held during the succeeding carnival, besides smaller receptions all the year round as soon as his daughter, the Grand Duchess Maria Theresa, began to take her part in society.

The Countess, in one of her many denunciatory letters on Napoleon, had maintained that on "the tyrant" fell the responsibility of having retarded the progress of Italy by a hundred years : this was a rash assertion, and there were no facts to bear out such a pessimistic reflection.

Tuscany had been anxious and timid ; but though biding her time, she showed by her marvellous expansion at the restoration, that the seed sown by Napoleon fourteen years previously had fallen on a soil rich in fertility, and to the Emperor was due the abundant harvest that had been germinating for so long.

Florence entered the ranks as a formidable competitor to Rome, and many strangers, who formerly merely gave her a passing glance on their way to the

Eternal City, were now enticed by her charms ; and before long the environs of Florence were a favourite resort of foreigners from all countries, who grew so attached to a life combining ease, economy, and interest, that to many it became their home by choice.

The Countess continued to receive as formerly, and though she estranged friends when she entered into political correspondence, such was not the case when discussions took place in Casa Alfieri. On those occasions her tact never abandoned her, and all harsh opinions were kept under control. The popularity of her salon never waned, but increased rather than the reverse ; and as hitherto, everyone sought an introduction to a lady of such widespread reputation. Both Chateaubriand and Lamartine had frequented her house ; and whilst the former, influenced perhaps by the beautiful Madame de Récamier, at whose shrine he worshipped, expressed himself rather bluntly on the Countess, and said, "Age had produced in her an opposite effect to what one expects, for, as a rule, time imprints certain lines of nobility on the face, when the lineage is good, whereas the Countess looked very ordinary with her clumsy figure and face devoid of expression," Lamartine showed more moderation in his judgment.

That the Countess had lost her youthful appearance was not a matter for surprise. She was well past middle-age, and already some years back Bonstetten had deplored the change in her looks.

Bonstetten had left Rome in 1774, and though an

unbroken correspondence had continued between them, he and the “Queen of Hearts” did not meet again for thirty-three years. When they met—philosopher though Bonstetten laid claim to be—he appears to have ignored the roll of time and the havoc that it irrevocably brings with it. He had carried away a smiling souvenir which was enshrined in his memory, and was totally unprepared for the indelible traces of the last thirty-three years. In some correspondence of his he pathetically refers to his disenchantment.

“I saw again the one whom I had left like an opening rosebud. It was at Florence in 1807. She was living there under the name of the Countess d’Albanie. How thankful I was the twilight darkened the room, for though it was still her voice and, in some degrees, her expression, all that remained of her beyond this was an old woman, whom in my heart I accused of having taken the place by magic of the one I had left in Rome. My first thought on reaching home was to look in the glass to see to what extent I myself had changed. I was surprised to find I did not look horrible after all.”

And yet after this shock to his feelings we are enabled to judge of Countess d’Albanie’s powerful attractions even in advancing years on reading that, according to Bonstetten’s own words, he remained devoted to her all his life; and sad though the deception had been, he shows us in the following letter, written ten years later, that he was still constant to his ideal.

"ROME, 10 March, 1817.

"I do not know how it is, madame, but I find myself again in Rome, though I am quite ready to leave this town so full of souvenirs. I shall go to Florence, where I shall hope to have the very great pleasure of seeing you again. I never pass through the Piazza degli Apostoli without looking up at the balcony and house where I first saw you. I feel as if I should like to tell you all that has taken place in my life. I hope to be a certain time in Florence. I should be inconsolable did I not find you, but if you are not far from there, I shall ask permission to go and see you wherever you may be. If only pleasure had the power of rejuvenating one's appearance, as it does one's heart, you would find me quite unchanged, so great will be my pleasure to see you again."¹

Chateaubriand's criticism on her want of expression must either have been given thoughtlessly or from a feeling of prejudice against her; for all those who knew her best particularly remark on the intelligence and vivacity read in her face. In contradistinction to Chateaubriand's opinion, Lamartine's first impressions of the Countess, when she was a much older woman and he but a youth, recorded by him in his VII^{me} Entretien, merits to be cited, not only for the charming picture he gives us of the Countess such as we always imagined her to be, but also for that harmonious flow of language which constituted the great charm of Lamartine's works.

¹ *Lettres intimes de M. de Bonstetten.* Publiées par Saint-Réne Taillandier, p. 342.

"I was recommended to the Countess by M. Santilly, and received a note from her, asking me to dinner. On arriving at the hour indicated, I was met by three servants in the corridor, who conducted me into the presence of the Queen of England without a throne. There was nothing to bring to my mind at this time of her life that she had been 'Queen of Hearts' or all but Queen of an Empire. She was a little woman with rather a thick figure, and had lost all trace of youthfulness or elegance. The outline of the face being too full, detracted also from any ideal beauty, but her bright eyes, lovely hair, and beautiful mouth, combined with an expression full of intelligence, reminded one of what had once been, even if she could no longer command admiration. No one could fail to be captivated by her gracious words, easy manners, and friendly interest; and so natural was she in her intercourse that it was hard to say whether she descended to your level or drew you up to hers. She smiled at my evident embarrassment, and wishing to put me at my ease, she said, 'M. Santilly tells me that you write verses. You will no doubt like to visit the library and the room of the great man whose loss Italy deplores'; and turning to an old Abbé, she beckoned to him to accompany me, and he led the way to the rooms inhabited by Alfieri. The half-closed shutters softened the outer glare. As I looked round on the books so often held in his hand, the table at which he sat where his favourite Greek authors and a few half-filled sheets of his writing still lay to testify to his serious studies from which death alone had claimed him, I was seized with an indescribable emotion. The armchair in which he sat, the pen with which he wrote, the whole liveable atmosphere that pervaded the room, seemed only

waiting for the presence of the master, and had I been alone I should have knelt down and kissed the boards where the great poet so often trod. The dinner was simple and short, after which we returned to the salon, where the Countess received the most distinguished men of Florence. The visitors formed a semicircle round the hostess, who in front of her chair had a little table on which were placed some books. It seemed to me more like an academy than a gathering of guests at an evening party. The conversation was led by the Countess, and touched on various subjects, with the exception of politics, which, owing to the strict supervision of the police, was forbidden. I preferred to listen, and a true enthusiasm was roused in me as I heard the different opinions on the various epochs, people, and works of modern Italy. The open windows, through which could be seen the reflection of the moon on the Arno, and the sentiment of being under Alfieri's roof and close to his room, produced in my soul feelings impossible to describe ; and as I returned home after five hours passed in Countess d'Albanie's house, I formed the decision of making a serious study of the principal works relating to Italian literature. The veneration for Italy that took possession of my heart owing to that evening has never left me."

In after years, Lamartine, no longer the shy youth, but the poet who had risen to fame, frequently visited the Countess, and his first impressions on her, so ingenuously expressed, remained unaltered : they were still in his mind, when, fifty years later, he wrote the above-mentioned poetical description of his *début* in Casa Alfieri.

The restoration of the Bourbons had appeared a propitious moment to the Countess to assert her claims, and as she had enlisted Madame de Staël's sympathy and interest, with whom she had entered into a correspondence on the subject of the pension, there seemed a greater probability now than there had ever been of finally obtaining what she had pursued with such avidity.

Madame de Staël, writing from Paris, gave her the good news that the Duc de Richelieu was most favourably disposed and there was every hope of the pension being paid. She made so sure that the affair would be brought to a satisfactory conclusion that her prudence deserted her, and in a few lines written in January, 1817, she assured the Countess :—

“We are all very happy, my dear Queen, on the successful result of your affairs ; you are going to receive a handsome allowance to which you are all the more entitled by your noble refusal of it at another time. This success is a very happy circumstance, and though we ourselves have done our best towards realising your wish, it is entirely due to your name and the respect it inspires.”

But these sanguine expectations suffered an unexpected check ; and during the two months after this premature announcement there was an ominous silence on the affair in hand. At last, in April, Madame de Staël, though too ill to write herself, employed M. de Rocca's¹ services as secretary, and

¹ M. de Rocca was Madame de Staël's second husband.

the Countess received the following report on her petition :—

“ I leave the honour and pleasure of thanking you for your last letter, my dear Queen, to M. de Rocca, but as regards the management of your affairs, infirm as I am, I prefer looking after it myself. The French Commission has rejected your request, but as agreed on by the King, the Duc de Richelieu has promised me that you will receive compensation out of the civil list. Please then tell me in confidence by return of post if you prefer a pension or capital. If the latter, at what figure do you estimate your claim ? ”

The Commission to which Madame de Staël refers had been appointed by the French Government to liquidate debts due to English creditors. Countess d'Albanie's right to come under the category of a British subject was disputed, and even could she justify her claims as such, it was observed she would be included in the law of proscription.

Though undermined by fever and suffering greatly, Madame de Staël's solicitude for the Countess continued unabated during her last illness. It was a touching testimony of the unselfishness and wish to help others that had characterised Madame de Staël all her life through: it was also a supreme act of generosity towards the Countess to dedicate to her the last moments fast ebbing away, as on more than one occasion the Countess had been unnecessarily severe in her criticisms both on Madame de Staël herself and also in depreciating her books. Madame

de Staël, however, had cast into oblivion any former slights, and with the tenacity often given to the dying, she once more placed the pen in M. de Rocca's hand and bid him tell the Countess that the British Ambassador suggested she should declare herself a British subject, in which case she would be included in the decree that granted payment to the English. But to this proposal Madame de Staël ventured to express the opinion that she considered the Countess too great a personage to accept the position of a subject; and strongly advised her to abide by the Duc de Richelieu's proposal, which enabled her to enter into direct treaty with a crowned head, and guaranteed the success of her request.¹

From what can be gathered subsequent to these negotiations, the Countess refused to follow either course. She agreed with Madame de Staël that, to assume the position of an English suppliant, would be most derogatory to one who asserted her rights as a sovereign; nor would she condescend to accept as a favour from Louis XVIII. that which she maintained was a debt due from the Government.

Whether the Countess thought, after this renewed failure, that a visit to Paris might help towards a satisfactory solution to her affairs, or whether Fabre was the instigator of the three months they passed there during the summer of 1822, it is hard to say. From the correspondence which passed between her and her friends whilst she was absent from Italy

¹ *Lettres de Madame de Staël*, St. René Taillandier.

but little light is thrown upon the motive of her journey.

She does not appear to have gone there with any intention of making a prolonged stay, as on former occasions ; for the letters written to her were always addressed to the Embassy to Naples, Rue de Provence, and no mention is made where she and M. Fabre resided.

On looking through the letters written to her by the Marquis de Lucchesini, an Italian diplomat of note, we find that she still took a leading part in politics ; that she assisted at the opening of the French Chamber, and was so conversant with the political state of affairs that Lucchesini remarked she would save him undertaking a journey to Paris, as he would gain far more information from the Countess, when they met again, than from any personal observations of his own.¹

The return journey was made by way of Montpellier; M. Fabre had arrangements to superintend concerning a donation of pictures he had made to his natal town.

They also paid a visit to the Baron de Castille, one of the Countess's numerous friends and correspondents. He was the owner of a château close to Montpellier, and no sooner heard that she was in the neighbourhood than he sent her a most pressing invitation to be his guest at his Château d'Argilliers. Though without much claim to poetic abilities, he

¹ *Le Portefeuille de la Comtesse d'Albanie*, p. 545.

greeted her arrival by a sonnet he had been inspired to compose on this event ; it commenced thus :—

“ Voir arriver dans ma retraite
L’Epouse du dernier Stuart !
Venez, voisins : à cette fête
Hâtes vous tous de prendre part,” etc.¹

He also arranged many festivities in her honour.

After this short interruption to her home life, the Countess was once more settled in Florence before the new year of 1823, and never left it again, save for short excursions in Italy.

She recommenced the routine of her usual life, and in her own words, was “content to sit at the window and look on at passing events.”

The Casa Alfieri (for as long as the Countess lived the house was known by that familiar name) still continued to be the favourite resort of all foreigners of distinction. Perhaps no one was more congenial to the Countess during her last years than Elizabeth, Duchess of Devonshire, the daughter of Lord Bristol, Bishop of Derry. The striking beauty which she preserved up to an advanced age was but a small part of the charms that completed the attractions of this exceptional woman. The Duchess resided in Rome for many years ; and so identified herself with all the interests of the place, and assumed a position of so much importance in the artistic, literary, and scientific movement of the town, that of all the Countess’s contemporaries, she only could be said to

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 557.

compete with her in charm, learning, and an attraction that laid all Rome at her feet.

There were many other beautiful women in Italy at that time, but none possessed of so many gifts as the Duchess of Devonshire. We find the Duchess of Hamilton adorning the Countess's salon. She was Beckford's daughter, the well-known author of *Vathek*, whose valuable library from Fonthill embellished Hamilton Palace for so many years. The Duchess was a rival to Lady Jersey, sister to Lord Burghersh, in looks and grace ; Lady Jersey had been warmly recommended to the Countess by Madame de Staël, who in her note of introduction described her as "the prettiest and most agreeable woman in England."

Amongst Italians, the Principessa Rospigliosi and her husband were always welcome guests in Casa Alfieri. For the long period of thirty-five years their friendship for Alfieri's friend had remained unbroken. The Principessa was one of the ladies who had taken part in Alfieri's *Antigone*, on that memorable evening at the Spanish Embassy in Rome, when his notoriety as tragedian was sealed. Thirty-five years had swept by since the Principessa, at that time Duchessa di Zagarolo, had contributed to Alfieri's fame ; but great as had been the changes in the Countess's circumstances, the Rospigliosi were her most reliable protectors.

Regarding the Corsini family, we have already had reason to note their fidelity to the Stuarts. Their hospitality towards, and sincere proofs of interest in, the exiled house had been handed down from one

member of the family to the other ; and the Prince Corsini living at the period on which we are engaged was not less true to the traditions inspired by his predecessors, and was unvarying in his courtesy to Countess d'Albanie.

Canova was constantly in Florence during those brief intervals when he was not called away by crowned heads. His last journey to London was in 1816, when he received orders from George IV., then Prince Regent, to put into execution the monument erected by the King in St. Peter's in Rome to the memory of the Stuart Princes. Canova had formed a close intimacy with the Countess previous to Alfieri's death, and the constant communication she kept up with the sculptor regarding the monument in Santa Croce formed a bond between them, to which Canova, now advanced in years, attached a sincere sentiment. The refined taste of the artist, his intelligence, and his remarkable talent for expressing his ideals and views on art, made Canova's visits always welcome to the Countess, whose natural disposition towards a love of art readily responded to the aged sculptor's mastery of the subject.

These few names are only brought forward to enable our readers to notice that the varied elements of the Countess's salon were of a nature to form an interesting whole. It would be impossible to specify all those who present themselves to our mind ; an idea of the position she held may partly be formed by glancing at the *Portefeuille de la Comtesse d'Albanie*, so

often quoted in this work: the large collection of letters addressed to her in that volume only, conveys to us in some degree her extended acquaintance with most distinguished people. Even that large collection of letters is but a small part of the correspondence which comprised such names as Hobhouse, Thomas Moore, and Samuel Rogers. It seems only necessary to add that no celebrity passed through Florence without requesting an introduction to Countess d'Albanie ; and Sismondi's description of her salon, as the stage box where the best view was to be had of an endless magic-lantern exhibition, on the slides of which figured all European notabilities, seems a very appropriate simile.

Up to 1820 the Countess had given no signs of failing health. Her remarkable constitution had enabled her to follow a most methodical life ; and even now, though the march of time was beginning to tell on her, at all seasons of the year when the weather permitted it, as soon as she was up she went for her morning walk, and in the summer months she left the house before seven.

She was singularly devoid of any wish to attract attention. She dressed in the simplest way, and was well known in her large hat and shawl, walking as she generally did in the direction of the Cascine, with a firm, and rather heavy step. She was always treated with deference and respect by the people to whose salutations she responded with smiles. As soon as the Countess returned home she breakfasted, and then

retired to her well-furnished library. She first attended to her correspondence in the systematic way that she observed in all her occupations: the letters having been written, she next commenced her studies.

It was her habit to keep accurate notes of all the books she read. In 1799, the year she passed chiefly in the villa outside Florence, owing to the French occupation, she made a note that she had read thirty-nine works, and gave all the titles.

By the help of these notes she wrote many analytical remarks on the authors who most interested her, and liked drawing comparisons between them.

Amongst these clever essays, we find mention of an analysis on the *Life and Letters of Madame Roland*, and a parallel between Macchiavelli and Alfieri. The *Wealth of Nations*, by A. Smith, and Voltaire's *Henriade* also came under her criticisms.¹

These few examples are sufficient to show that she was an earnest student of literature; and we are enabled to understand that such an unusually well-read woman was not a superficial talker, but was competent to hold literary discussions with writers, who though of established fame, often felt they had in her a formidable rival in knowledge and intelligence.

A certain part of the time was set apart for cultivation of art, after which her morning's occupation was concluded. Sunday she dedicated to the reception of artists and writers who required her assistance; but

¹ *La Contessa d'Albanie*, Reumont.

on other days, those who during her working hours were allowed into the precincts of her sanctum were only a favoured few.

She was not in the habit of paying many visits herself, but received two or three intimate friends at dinner every night, after which her salon was open to all those who were privileged visitors in her house.

Her guests always found her seated in the same chair as in the days of d'Azeglio's boyhood ; she was invariably dressed in black silk relieved with a muslin fichu, her white hair fell in curls on each side of her face, and a large bow completed the head-dress.

If a lady was announced of higher rank than herself, she half rose from her chair, but the instincts of a sovereign still dictated her actions, and to all other visitors she merely bowed.

The ladies occupied two rows of chairs placed in a semicircle, the men stood here and there behind them. The facility, already noticed, that the Countess had for languages put everyone at their ease, and by directing the drift of the conversation as best suited the company, all stiffness and formality was avoided that might have arisen from the conventional circle in which her guests were seated.

The Countess did not content herself with being the centre of intellectual réunions only. Sunday evenings were given up to entertainments for children, and she constantly gave small dances for young people. No one enjoyed more than she did to have youth round her ; and on those evenings reserved for the

dancers, the woman who all the morning had been engrossed in solving a mathematical problem, or working out some philosophical thesis, banished serious thoughts from her mind, and putting into practice some of the wise maxims of the philosophers she best loved, she greeted the young people with that charm of manner so distinctly her own, and dedicated herself to them all the evening as if that was the sole pleasure of her life.

Just as the contemporaries of her own age sought introductions to the most agreeable woman of the day, so these dances became such a popular institution, that those who were not invited felt that their social position was imperilled at not being bidden to the *soirées dansantes* in Casa Alfieri, and tried by every possible contrivance to penetrate the most elegant house in Florence.

The Countess was too clever a woman not to grasp the reason for the sudden anxiety shown by those who had always lived in Florence to be presented to her now; and in one of her letters to Foscolo we find she philosophically remarked:—

“ What do you say to my giving balls and concerts every Saturday? Everyone wishes to come; and those who have never paid any attention to me hitherto are now begging to be presented to me. After all it is very natural: it is not for the sake of the host and hostess that one goes to their house, but for the pleasure we expect them to provide for us. I have lived long enough to have acquired this certitude.”¹

¹ *Lettere inedite*, p. 138.

The Countess had been one of those fortunate people who can rely on their health, and had been singularly devoid of all the miserable ailments common to most ; doubtless her even temper and command of self contributed to this envied result. For this reason the final break-up to her health seemed to come very unexpectedly to all those friends who had never known her miss her daily walk or close her salon through any indisposition.

When the rumours of a serious illness were circulated, they were not credited ; and she herself had almost reached the limit of her long life before she realised that the moment for farewells was close at hand.

In a letter from Madame de Souza, in August, 1823, we notice that she expressed regret on hearing that the Countess was indisposed, and this is one of the earliest references to the fact. Madame de Souza herself did not appear to treat it as anything serious, for she merely remarked, "I am glad to think that your appetite is good, and that you feel equal to occupying yourself six hours a day, which shows me it is but a slight indisposition."¹

But though Madame de Souza prided herself on her talent for judging character, of which she had made a special study for the use of her novels, she had not come across a nature such as her friend's. She was therefore unable to form an idea of the tenacity and will-power which enabled the Countess

¹ *Le Portefeuille*, p. 588.

to brush on one side as contemptible weakness, physical pain, or self-pity, that might interfere with any aim she had in view. She considered that the only possible solution of leading a satisfactory life was to live every moment of it. Alfieri's death strengthened that conviction ; and the prospect of dragging out a lengthened existence to no purpose would have been impossible to one as full of resources as the Countess, and would only have added to the grief with which she was overwhelmed.

These being her views, she went straight on with the work she had proposed to herself to accomplish, and neither faltered nor paused till the evening of life slowly but surely asserted itself, and the gathering darkness compelled her to lay down her pen and close her book.

The only member of her family who seemed at all concerned about the reports of her health was her sister, Gustave Stolberg.

The Countess had had but little communication with her family ever since the day she had left Mons. The only sister with whom she seems to have been on affectionate terms was Princess Gustave, whose marriage with the Spanish Ambassador in Paris, it may be remembered, had been mooted by the Countess some years previously, but failed to be brought to any conclusion. These two sisters, though rarely meeting, had always been very much attached to each other, and Gustave always spoke of the Countess as her "real mother" ; for though the old Princess out-

lived her daughters, she was far too selfish, even in advanced age, to receive much of their affection.

Gustave could lay no claims to intelligence ; and her superficial education and general ignorance are seen by her letters, in which style, spelling, and handwriting are those of an uneducated person. The worldly mother had so entirely neglected her daughters that even the rudiments of instruction had been denied them. The sole exception was the Countess d'Albanie, who would doubtless have been brought up in the same careless way as her sisters, had it not been for the good fortune which placed her specially under the Empress Theresa's charge.

No sooner, therefore, did Gustave hear that the Countess was seriously indisposed than she wrote off a series of letters totally wanting in literary merit or form ; but though rough and unpolished, giving evidence of a warm heart and sincere affection for her sister. The first letter is dated

“FRANKFORT,

the 12th of the year 1824.

“MY DEAREST SISTER,—Just imagine, only yesterday, the 11th, did I receive your letter of the 27th. The post from Italy is most tiresome, and I have made complaints on the subject. Do not fear that our letters are opened. Our weekly correspondence is too well known, besides which those who opened the letters once would be disappointed at the insignificant news they contain, and would not do so a second time. As regards this letter, I wish it had never reached me ; it has only made me most unhappy,

and my heart is heavy as I write to you. You are suffering, and I am far from you ; from you who are my real mother ; from you who all your life have shown me so much affection and kindness. I ought to be ashamed of myself for saying so, but it vexes me to see so many others well and strong, and to know that you, my loving and loved sister, are suffering. Have you, at least, a good doctor in Florence ? Take great care of yourself, I beseech you. If you love me, do so for my sake. I am sure that the thirst of which you complain must be a great torment. I know someone who was in the same condition as you, and who is quite cured. He was given grapes, acid lozenges, and pomegranates ; this is a fruit of which you can have as much as you want in Florence, it will refresh your mouth and throat. What torture I shall suffer if I have to wait fifteen days for another letter ! ”

But the Countess had far passed the stage when fruits could effect a cure, and the latest news from Florence gave no hopes of improvement in her condition. Gustave, still more alarmed, again gives advice in the same childish terms in a letter written on the 19th.

“ I am miserable at the bad news of your health ; you are both suffering and sad. I beg you to let me go and nurse you, and keep you company ; as soon as you are well again, I will return here to the chains by which I am bound. You are my real mother, the one that bears the name of my mother has it only for the sake of decorum and conventionality. My heart has always been given to you ; I am in tears as I write. Let me go to you, never mind that it is winter ; I will come all the same with the greatest

pleasure, if you wish it. My mother is well. I have received your enclosure ; you are joking when you excuse yourself for this trifling delay, no one is more precise than you. Thank you a thousand times. I hear that Louise¹ says you are giving me the money that was destined for her, that is to say, was settled on her, but anyhow she has not dared to make any scenes of disapproval. Do, my dear sister, take some jelly, it will keep up your strength, and beg M. Fabre to write if it is too tiring for you to do so ; I shall be so grateful to him. Tell me the doctor's opinion, and why does he not make greater efforts to prevent you becoming so weak ? ”

There was a pathetic narvét  in the ill-expressed yet genuinely affectionate letters from Gustave, who, like Martha of old, troubling about many things, could not soar higher than material anxiety for her sister at the time that her death was a question of hours, and was only retarded by the Countess's vitality. The most delightful of all Gustave's letters was the one she addressed to M. Fabre in her despair at getting no reply from her sister. Her urgent appeal to him was made in the name of “Count Alfieri, who was not only my sister's friend, but yours also, and this gives me the greatest confidence that you will listen to me and write at once.” We are not told if Fabre accepted this reference to Alfieri in the spirit in which it was dictated : coming from anyone else it would have been an impertinence, but in Gustave's case was entirely due to lamentable ignorance of the world.

¹ Louise was another of Countess d'Albanie's sisters.

During this interchange of letters the Countess was sinking rapidly. Her breathing was most painful, and a tendency to dropsy, that had been coming on for some years, was now very marked. All the same, she insisted on getting up, and even tried to continue her morning walk, though it was evident to everyone how greatly it fatigued her. She refused to admit that any change in her habits was necessary, and still received her friends in the evening.

It was only during the very last days of her illness, when her strength entirely failed her, that she recognised her hours were numbered.

As soon as she realised that she had reached the limitations of her activity, with the composure and tranquillity of soul that had accompanied her through life, she prepared for the great change so near at hand. In the full possession of her faculties she received the consolations of religion, and died the morning of January 29th, 1824, in the seventy-second year of her age.

Thus a woman of noble instincts and striking individuality passed placidly away. The full force of her power in both intellectual and social spheres had not been fully recognised till the closed doors of Casa Alfieri drew attention to her death, and threw a deep gloom over all those who had become accustomed to the welcome that, under its hospitable roof, always awaited them.

It was unavoidable that a woman who had been wife of the claimant to a throne, who had captivated

a man of genius, such as was Alfieri, and in advanced years had brought a third admirer to her feet, should escape disparaging and contemptuous remarks. But it is hoped that the preceding pages, though impartial in praise or blame, may give a more extended acquaintance with, and correct estimate on, a woman who occupied a great deal of attention, and had to bear, as we have reason to observe, a large share of envious misrepresentation.

No one was better qualified than Madame de Souza to judge of her friend's qualities and defects ; and it appears to us she sums up the Countess's character in the few following sentences she once wrote to her :—

“ Your happiness is assured by your character and intelligence, whilst your goodness and indulgence towards others lead to your being able to accommodate yourself to everyone. If by chance you are ever inclined to be put out, you have only time to shrug one shoulder ; before you can raise the other your ill-temper is already over. You yourself have never noticed this fact, but it has not escaped me. Many a time have I remarked it, and admired your wonderful good nature.”¹

Kindness and generosity were the prevailing characteristics of the Countess, and greatly led to her popularity. She had none of the petty meanness or assertive self-conceit so constantly to be found in women of mental capacities, so vastly superior, as in her case, to those with whom she associated, and

¹ *Le Portefeuille*, p. 629.

she was as willing to learn from others herself as to impart what she knew to those who sought her advice.

She never had to be asked twice for any charitable appeal ; we have cited many examples of her generosity, and in numerous cases she did not wait to be solicited, but came forward to offer her aid and assistance.

The sorrow on her death was universal in a town where thirty years of her life had been passed. However captious critics might argue to prove that her reputation had been represented as far greater than her actual merits justified, those with whom she had lived for so many years could not do otherwise than admire the remarkable way in which, during the different periods of revolution and political disturbances, she was never submerged by the conflicting currents, but maintained a secure and unshaken position, whereas so many had been crushed and annihilated by the dire trend of events.

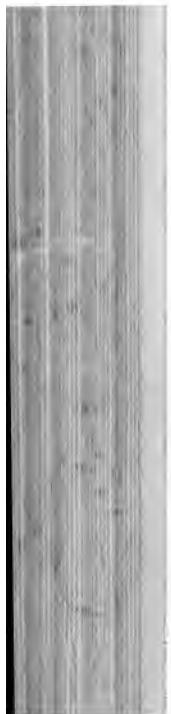
Under personal direction of the Grand Duke Ferdinand, Countess d'Albanie's death was gazetted in the news relating to the Grand Ducal Court of Florence. The Grand Duke, in a few simple words, drew attention to his desire to honour a lady who in all periods of her life had given proofs of her excellence and benevolence ; he said he had always considered her as the brightest ornament of his capital, and wished to bring her before the youth of Florence as a model of gracious and refined manners.

In 1817 the Countess had made her will. She had not omitted to mention her mother and three sisters ;



By permission of Fratelli Alinari.

PORTRAIT OF COUNTESS D'ALBANIE, BY FABRE.
In the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.



but the largest share of the legacy to her family was assigned to Gustave. She left a cameo with a likeness of Charles Edward to her nephew, the Duke of Berwick, as well as two miniatures, one of Mary Queen of Scots, and the other of the Cardinal of York ; the portraits of herself and Alfieri, painted by Fabre, she bequeathed to the Uffizi Gallery. After naming various other legacies, she designated François Fabre her sole heir, "in recognition," she said, "of my gratitude for his attachment to me and his unvaried attentions, whatever may have been my circumstances, for the period of twenty years, and in anticipation of the durability of his courtesy, on which I have no reason to doubt."

We find it rather hard to share the sentiment that prompted the Countess's tribute to Fabre's devotion.

It was a strange fact that in the midst of the genuine expressions of sorrow testified on her death, Fabre alone stood aloof, and attracted attention by his callous indifference on the loss of his companion. In a formal letter he wrote to Alfieri's sister, he confined himself to announcing her death, and remarked that it was treated in Florence almost as a public calamity ; but beyond saying, "For the last thirty years she contributed to my happiness," the letter is cold and lifeless, without the trace of a single phrase expressive of real emotion or grief. He proceeded to say : "She suffered very little, and received the consolations of religion. All those who surrounded her could not fail to admire her courage

and the absolute control she maintained over her faculties."¹

This last sentence in Fabre's letter has been construed as having been purposely inserted by him with the view of reminding Alfieri's relations that all the Countess's property was in his hands ; and as he foresaw that considerable discontent would arise from her will, he thought it advisable to emphasise the fact that it was made when she was in full possession of her faculties, and could not be disputed.

In later years Fabre was made Baron by Charles X. of France ; but he became a nonentity to society in general as soon as the Countess was no longer there to throw over him a dim reflection of her brilliancy. It was noticed that in his old age, when he had become cynical and irritable, if spoken to of the Countess, he always mentioned her in respectful terms, though he avoided if possible referring to her at all.²

It is impossible not to deplore the error made by the Countess in linking her name to a man so inferior to her in all respects. It was one of those fatal steps seemingly unimportant, but the full consequences of which are only apparent long after those who have acted injudiciously have passed away. In this case the Countess's reputation has greatly suffered owing to Fabre's unseemly behaviour after her death.

Alfieri, as we know, had left all his papers in her hands to dispose of as she considered best. Her first

¹ *Inedited Letter V. Alfieri*, Bertana, p. 271.

² *Ibid.*, p. 278.

impulse was to leave them to the town of Turin, with the conviction that it would be most in accordance with the poet's wishes ; but her attention was drawn to the fact that it would be unadvisable to leave valuable documents to a town where Alfieri was particularly disliked, whereas the Brera in Milan was suggested as a far more suitable depository for the books and papers. In Milan Alfieri was admired and respected, and anything that had ever belonged to him would be treated with the veneration of sacred relics.

The Countess followed this advice, but though mentioned in her will, through no fault of hers, the wish expressed by her was not carried out ; and with the exception of a few MSS. in the Laurenziana Library of Florence, Fabre packed up the rich spoils and transported all on which he could lay his hands to the Museum at Montpellier. Even Dante's ring, that Alfieri always wore, and specially mentioned by him on a sheet of paper in his own hand as destined for his dear friend, the Abbé di Caluso, did not escape falling into Fabre's avaricious clutches.

The resentment has been so intense on the loss sustained by Italy of these valuable papers, that Countess d'Albanie has not escaped the blame most justly attached to Fabre's want of delicacy in thus despoiling the country of their due. It is to be regretted that all Alfieri's wishes were not carried out during the Countess's lifetime ; but those who have taken the trouble to consider the question draw

attention to the fact that the Aus appeared at one moment dispose Countess's first decision valid, at had demurred, of sending the book her perplexity as to what was mo the matter seemed to have lain in her death.

All her own books shared the belonging to Alfieri. The authors, companions of her life, were ruthless! the shelves ; nor did the favourite had been the consolation of her dai general clearance. Many of the bc her incessant communion with the and the conciseness of the annotatio were sufficient to reveal her char absolute stranger. In a copy of La ters was written on the first page reflection :—

“ This book in 1804 belongs d'Albanie ; her notes on it are dra observations on this world, in whi fifty-one, she feels she has livec having lost all that attached her life.”

In many of her books there were to Alfieri ; and though but a wor they are sufficient to impress us Alfieri alone dictated her actions and thoughts, as in the days when she

side. This makes it still more inexplicable that she should have left everything in Fabre's hands ; and unless he used pressure, it appears an incredible oversight on her part not to have inserted a clause concerning the destination of Alfieri's library and her own.

The Musée Fabre at Montpellier is now a rich storehouse of documents and letters, thanks to the double collection of Alfieri's and the Countess's property ; and her correspondence alone forms the principal interest of the municipal library of the town. There are many hundreds of letters addressed to her, the most important of which are published in M. Pélissier's volume, so constantly referred to in this work. Most of the letters in the Museum are dated after 1803. Doubtless the pillage of Alfieri's and the Countess's papers, in Paris in 1792, accounts for the absence of letters of an earlier date ; it is also supposed that many papers were destroyed by Fabre.

The Grand Duke had given permission for the interment of the Countess in Santa Croce, and Fabre contributed to the honouring of her memory by putting up a monument to her in the side chapel of the Holy Sacrament. The inscription on the monument was composed by Alfieri, but the epitaph as originally written underwent some modifications, as it referred to the affection by which they were bound in terms that were considered too forcible for an inscription on a tomb. Her merits are recorded, also the title she bore in exile, but no mention is made of her

union with the descendant of an ancient line of kings. Perhaps the woman who said that her only merit lay in having been the friend of a man superior to herself was better remembered in this humble epitaph, by which her simplicity and candour are handed down to posterity, than by recording the regal attributes of the last Princess of a Royal House.

The inscription is as follows :—

HIC SITA EST
 ALOYSIA E PRINCIBUS STOLBERGIIS
 ALBANIÆ COMITISSA
 GENERE FORMA MORIBUS
 INCOMPARABILI ANIMI CANDORE
 PRAECLARISSIMA
 HANNONIÆ MONTIBUS NATA
 V.A. LXXII M. IV. D. IX.
 OB. FLORENTIÆ D. XXIX. M. JANUARII
 A.D. MDCCCXXIV
 GRATI ANIMI ET DEVOTÆ REVERENTIÆ
 MONUMENTUM.

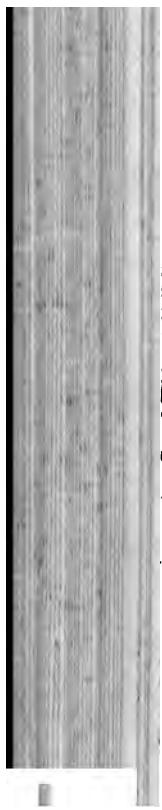
In this way a great race died out.

Perhaps some distant trace of its royal blood may still be found in the House of Savoy through the marriage of Anna, the grandchild of Charles I., with Victor Amadeo, Duke of Savoy, in 1684.

Many of us may remember two brothers, well known in London, under the names of James Sobieski Stolberg Stuart and Charles Edward Count d'Albanie. James Sobieski died in 1872, but his brother survived him eight years.



THE STUART MONUMENT IN ST. PETER'S, ROME.



Both brothers were fully convinced themselves that Charles Edward was their grandfather, and Count d'Albanie, in his interesting private correspondence, constantly refers to "the tombs of those of his fallen house under the great dome of St. Peter's," and in one of his letters he mentions that his brother, James Sobieski, was thus named after the eldest son of the great John Sobieski, King of Poland.

Without entering into the question regarding their identity, no one could fail to be struck by the Count's dignified mien, his courtly manners, and a certain resemblance to the House of Stuart.

To any who visited him in his humble abode in Belgravia he would relate numerous anecdotes, not only concerning his own interesting career, but many incidents regarding those he considered his ancestors ; and to the friends who felt a sincere sympathy for the Stuart Princes he was always ready to show the large collection of relics that had formerly belonged to them, and had come into his possession.

He used also to point with pride to the Legion of Honour conferred on him by Napoleon at Waterloo when a mere boy, and he gave many proofs of the Emperor's invariable kindness.

He died from heart disease the night of Christmas Eve, 1880, on board a steamer on his way to Bordeaux. Both brothers lie in Lord Lovat's burial ground in Scotland, who was a kind friend to them in adverse circumstances.

The belief of the brothers that they were connected

with the Stuart family was founded on the episode at Pisa, already referred to in preceding pages. The reported birth of a son to Charles Edward was the cause of their claims as his grandsons.

This anecdote is mentioned merely as an historical curiosity, without giving it any other importance.

Sic transit gloria mundi.

END OF VOL. II

APPENDIX A

Chi m'allontana dal leggiadro viso,
Da bellezza e modestia riunita,
Che col semplice suo blando sorriso,
Amare a un tempo e a riverire invita ?
Chi in si barbaro modo hammi diviso
Dalla dolce fontana di mia vita,
Da' bei negri occhi, che il mio cor conquis
Hanno, e la mente d' ogni error guarita ?
Livor, viltade, ipocrisia, l'ammanto
Osan vestir di coscienza pia ;
E dal lor cougiurar nasce il mio pianto.
Ma il di verrà, turba malnata e ria,
Ch' io pur tornando alla mia donna accanto
Farò sentirti se poeta io sia ! Op.

Op. XI. 96.

The above sonnet, written shortly after Alfieri's separation from Countess d'Albanie, is an autograph in the Fabre Museum at Montpellier.

APPENDIX B

Tu il sai, donna mia vera, e il sai tu sola
Com' io viva, e perchè viver consenta;
E un sol pensier dell' esser mi consola,
Che s' io cessassi la tua vita è spenta.

Invan colei che ai martir lunghi invola
Il suo feroce acciaro mi appresenta;
Da tergo odo una tua fiebil parola
Che grida: E me tu lasci a morte lenta?

Pur, poichè da un sol filo, e non ben sodo,
Pendon due vite, o mia verace amica,
Io di serbar la tua stentando godo.

APPENDIX C

Sublime speechio di veraci detti,
Mostrami in corpo e in anima qual sono,
Capelli or radi in fronte e rossi pretti,
Lunga statura, e capo a terra prono.

Sottil persona in su due stinchi schietti,
Bianca pelle, occhi azzurri, aspetto buono,
Giusto naso, bel labbro, e denti eletti,
Pallido in volto più che un re sul trono.

Or duro, acerbo, ora pieghevol, mite,
Irato sempre, e non maligno mai,
La mente, e il cor meco in perpetua lite,

Per lo più mesto, e talor lieto assai,
Or stimandomi Achille ed or Tersite
Uom se' tu grande o vil? Muori e il saprai.

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